

SERMONS

Preach'd on

Several Occasions.

The Fourth Volume.

By JOHN CONANT, D.D.

Publish'd by

JOHN Lord Bishop of *Chichester*.

L O N D O N,

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SERMONS

Several Occasions

The Fifth Volume

By JOHN CONANT, D.D.



THE
PUBLISHER
TO THE
READER.

IN the last Volume of Sermons before this, there was notice given of a design to publish the Author's Life ; a work that would be very acceptable to those that knew him, and very useful to such also as did not know him. But for the present, that design is laid aside ; however, I hope there will be some recompence made for the want of that, by this Fourth Volume of Sermons now Published

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To the Reader.

*lished from his Manuscripts: And
that they may attain the end of the
Author in Preaching and in leaving
them to be Published, is what I
heartily pray for,*

Nov. 13. 1702.

John Chichester.

THE

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of

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of the Oyntment. Then saith one of his Disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simons Son, which should betray him, why was not this Oyntment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the Poor? This he said, not that he cared for the Poor, but because he was a Thief, and had the Bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, let her alone, against the day of my Burying hath she kept this: For the Poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always. P. 377.

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SERMON I.

I COR. xiiij. 1, 2, 3.

*Though I speak with the Tongues of Men
and of Angels, and have not Charity, I
am become as sounding Brass, or
tinkling Cymbal.*

*And though I have the gift of Prophecy
and understand all Mysteries, and all
Knowledge; and though I have all
Faith, so that I could remove Moun-
tains, and have no Charity, I am no-
thing.*

*And though I bestow all my Goods to feed
the Poor, and though I give my Body
to be burned, and have not Charity, it
profiteth me nothing.*

IN this Chapter, which I purpose
(God enabling) to go thorough,
the Apostle treats of the Commem-
dation of Charity. This excellent Grace
he commends unto us several ways.

The First Sermon.

1. From the absolute Necessity thereof in order to Salvation, in the first, second and third Verses.

2. From the Nature, Properties, and Effects thereof, in the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh Verses.

3. From the durableness of it, in the remainder of the Chapter.

The Necessity of Charity he sheweth by a double Comparison.

1. He compares it with Gifts, and those of all common Gifts the most excellent, and the most admired ; and he affirms the Necessity of Charity to be such, that without it all those rare and extraordinary Gifts signifie nothing.

2. He compares it with Sufferings, and Doings, or Performances, and both these also such as are of greatest account among Men, and have the highest acceptance with God, if they be duely qualified ; that is, if they proceed from Love ; and he affirms that these likewise avail nothing without Charity.

I shall first briefly explain the words, and then speak to that which is principally intended in them.

Though

The First Sermon.

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Though I speak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels : With the Tongues of Men, that is, with whatever Tongues there are found among Men ; if I had all the several Languages of all the Nations in the World, and could understand and speak them all exactly : and though I speak with the Tongues of Angels, that is, though I had the most excellent Faculty of Speech, Angelical Language or Eloquence ; though I spake with such a Tongue as Angels might make use of, if they needed any such Instrument of Speech, as that with which we speak. In this Sense it seems to be that the Psalmist speaking of Manna, calls it *Angels Food* ; so excellent a Food, that if Angels needed Food, they might eat of it. But to go on with the Text.

Psal. 78.

25.

If I speak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding Brass, or as a tinkling Cymbal : That is, all my Tongues, excellency of Speech, and admired Eloquence, without Charity, are but an empty and useless sound, that can be of no real Advantage to me. All be it these Endowments may be of some use to others though they be separated from

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B 2

Charity,

The First Sermon.

Charity, yet can they not in the least be beneficial to the Person himself, in reference either to his acceptance with God here, or the Salvation of his Soul hereafter.

And *though I have the Gift of Propheſie.* In the holy Scriptures Propheſie ſometimes ſignifies the foretelling of Things to come, and ſometimes only expounding, teaching, or declaring the Truths of God, or publiſhing and ſetting forth the great Works of God, to the Glory of his Name, and the Edification of the Hearers. In this Senſe we are to underſtand Propheſie, when we read that *Jeduthun*, and *Aſaph*, and *Heman*, with their Sons, were by the appointment of *David*, to propheſie with Harps, and Pſalteries, and Cymbals; that is, to praiſe the Lord ſinging unto thoſe Muſical Inſtruments. So we read of the words of King *Lemuel*, *the Propheſie which his Mother taught him.* By which Propheſie we are to underſtand nothing elſe but thoſe holy Inſtructions, afterwards recorded in that Chapter, which *Bathsheba* gave unto her Son *Solomon*. In this Senſe is the word uſed no leſs than ten times in *1 Cor. 14.* And this is moſt probably the ſignification

1 Chron.
25. 1, 2, 3.

Prov. 31.
1.

The First Sermon.

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tion of the word in my Text ; though we may, if we think that better, take it in the greatest latitude, under Propheſie comprehending as well the foretelling of Things to come, as publiſhing and declaring the Truths, the great Works, and the Praises of God : For the Gift of Propheſie, take it in what ſenſe you will, is nothing to a Man's ſpiritual and everlaſting Eſtate, without Charity.

Though I have the Gift of Propheſie, and underſtand all Myſteries ; that is, ſacred and heavenly Myſteries, the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God, the moſt abſtruſe and deep Things of the Goſpel ; and though I have all Knowledge, all kinds and all the meaſures and degrees of ſacred Knowledge, of the Knowledge of heavenly Things : And though I have all Faith ; which we are to underſtand not of juſtifying or ſaving Faith, but of the Faith of Miracles ; for ſo it follows, Though I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains ; that is, though I have the higheſt meaſure of that Faith, though my Faith in that kind were ſo ſtrong that I could do the moſt ſtrange and even incredible Things, yet if I have not

B 3

Charity

Charity I am nothing, that is, nothing in a truly spiritual estimate, nothing in God's account, nothing as to the Comfort and Salvation of my own Soul, though I may be admired by others, and be also by my Gifts some ways useful and beneficial to them. So then we have the Apostle's full meaning in this Proposition,

That the most excellent and the most admired Gifts, without Charity, avail nothing towards the Salvation of the Person endowed with them.

For the Proof of this Truth no Scripture can be more full and express than this which I am insisting on: However I shall further clear it, and confirm it by several Arguments grounded on the Scriptures.

1. None of those Gifts are Evidences of our Effectual Calling and Regeneration, as Charity is. *We know that we have passed from Death unto Life because we love the Brethren.* And so again, *Let us love one another, for Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God.*

1 John 3.
14.

1 John 4.
7.

2. To

2. To none of those Gifts are the Promises of Life and Salvation made, as they are to Charity. The Kingdom of Heaven, with all the Joys thereof, is the Kingdom which God *hath promised to them that love him.* There hath God prepared for those that love him, such Things as *neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear hath heard, nor have entred into the Heart of Man.* Jam. 2. 5. 1 Cor. 2.

3. None of those Gifts commend us unto God, or render us more acceptable to him: But if any Man love God, *the same is known of him;* that is, he is acknowledged, owned, approved and accepted of him. 1 Cor. 8.

Use 1. Let no Man then be lifted up by reason of his Gifts; let no Man please and admire himself in respect of his natural Parts, or acquired Abilities in any kind. Whatever he may be in his own account, or in the account of others, he is nothing the more in God's account for any such common Endowments; nor must he expect the more Favour with God, or to fare the better in the least with him for any of these Things. Wherefore if you would understand and judge of your self aright,

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you must take your own measure, and estimate your self according to what you are in Love and Grace, and not in Gifts. What you are in Charity, and true Grace, that you are in God's account, and no more. And if the most excellent Gifts are nothing without Charity, then certainly much more may the same be affirmed of Riches, and Honour, and high Places, and fine Cloaths, and Beauty, and Strength, and Worldly Interests and Carnal Relations : For it must be confessed that the Gifts of the Mind, especially those Gifts which, in respect of the Objects about which they are conversant, may be called spiritual Gifts, are far more excellent and more desirable than any of those outward Things ; and therefore if the most excellent Gifts be nothing in God's account without Charity, those other Things, yea the very best of them, are less than nothing. How vain a thing then is it for Men to rate and value themselves according to these Things, as if upon the account of them they might conclude themselves more beloved of God, and might consequently expect more Favour with him hereafter ! These Things, assure your self, shall all
go

go for meer Cyphers that will signifie nothing, when God comes to reckon with you. Then one dram of Charity, the very least degree of true Grace, will stand you in more stead than all these Things which you now so highly prize, though you had an hundred times as much of them as you have.

Use 2. If you have Gifts, take heed you rest not in them, but labour after Grace. No Man hath greater cause to press hard after Grace than he whose Talent of Gifts is largest. For,

1. The greater Talent of Gifts any Man hath, the more he needs Grace : And this both to keep him humble, and to enable him to use and manage his Gifts aright.

(1.) To keep him humble ; for Gifts beget Pride. What the Apostle saith of Knowledge, 1 Cor. 8. 1. *Knowledge puffeth up*, the same is true of all common Gifts, they leaven Men with Self-conceit, and an high Opinion of their own Worth, unless they be seasoned with a proportional measure of Grace.

(2.) To help him to use and manage his Gifts aright. Where Charity is wanting, the more Knowledge and other Gifts

Gifts any Man hath, the more apt is he to abuse them to ostentation, and other ill purposes. *The Charity that edifieth*; 1 Cor. 8. 1. that's the Grace that disposeth us to imploy our Knowledge and other Gifts, so as may best tend to the building up of our selves and others in Faith and Holiness.

2. The greater Talent of Gifts any Man hath received, if he be void of Grace, the more sad will his account be hereafter, when it shall appear that all his Gifts as he imployed then, were of no other Advantage to him, then to render him a fitter Instrument in Satan's hand to do mischief.

Use 3. Let no Person whose Capacity is weak and narrow, and whose Gifts are small, be thereupon discouraged; these are not the Things which God chiefly looks after, and according to which he values Men. Let him look after Grace, and be sure he be not without some measure of those better *things that accompany Salvation*, and be contented with that meaner competency of Gifts which God hath made him capable of. Had he the rarest Gifts of any Person in the World, without Charity
he

he would be never the nearer Heaven for them ; but it may be, through his abuse of them, a great deal the farther off.

Use 4. Let even the weakest sincere Christian, and true Believer, though his Faith should seem to be but as a grain of Mustard-seed, I say, let him be greatly thankful for any measure of Grace. If God hath bestowed on you but a little true Grace, he hath therein done more for you, than if he had enriched and adorned you with all the rare Gifts that Humane Nature is capable of. If you perfectly understood all Languages, and could speak all the Tongues in the World ; if you were exactly acquainted with all the Secrets of Nature, and all the depths and profound Mysteries of the Gospel, and could discourse of these Things to the admiration and astonishment of all your Hearers ; if you had Faith to work more Miracles than all the Prophets in the Old Testament, and than Christ and his Apostles in the New, yet would not all this without Charity bring you to Heaven : You might with all these rare Gifts be turn'd into Hell, and eternally perish.

In

In the next place the Apostle pronounceth the same of Doing and Suffering, which he had pronounced of Gifts.

First, Of Doing : *Though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.* Whence we may observe,

That the best Duties, the highest Performances, without Charity, avail nothing.

Several of the Particulars by which the former Point was confirmed, might serve for the Confirmation of this also. But not here to insist on them again, I shall add two other Reasons,

1 Cor.
16. 14.

1. Charity is intrinsically and absolutely necessary to the due and acceptable performance of every Duty : For God prescribes not only the substance of that Duty which he requires of us, but likewise the manner of performance, that the Things to be done by us, be done from Love. *Let all your Things be done with Charity.* So then Charity runs through the whole Law, and must be mingled with every Duty, and influence every Duty as the Principle from whence

whence it proceeds, and by which 'tis acted.

2. What is not from Love, is evermore from some other base and sinful Principle : as from Pride, Vain-glory, respect to our Worldly Advantage, an Opinion of Merit, or the like. Now such undue and sinful Motives, vitiate, corrupt, and poyson all that we do, and cause the most specious, the most glorious Performances, as to outward appearance, to be odious unto God ; and instead of being an *Odour of a sweet smell, a Sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God*, as the Apostle speaks, *Phil. 4. 18.* to send up a loathsome stink into his Nostrils. Now to apply this Point.

Use 1. We may hence discern the Reason why the Apostle presseth Charity so earnestly, and so frequently. *Let all your Things be done with Charity, 1 Cor. 16. 14.* the place a little before mentioned. *Follow after Charity,* ^{1 Cor. 14. 1.} *desire,* pursue it. *Above all Things put* ^{Col. 3. 14.} *on Charity,* be ye clothed with it. And speaking unto *Timothy*, he saith, *Be* ^{1 Tim. 4. 12.} *thou an Example in Charity.* And, *Fol-* ^{2 Tim. 2. 22.} *low Righteousness, Faith, Charity.* And so

2 Pet. 1. 7. so the Apostle St. Peter, *Add to Godliness Brotherly-kindness, and to Brotherly-kindness Charity. Above all Things have fervent Charity among your selves.* The Reason why Charity is so much pressed, is, because without it whatsoever we have else signifies nothing.

Use 2. This shews how much it concerns us to look into, and examine the Principles of our best Actions and highest Performances. How specious and beautiful soever they may appear outwardly, if Charity be not within, if that be not the Root and Principle of them, the secret Engine by which we are moved and acted in what we do, all our Labour is lost ; God values it not. Men may be apt to think they have done much Good several ways ; but the Question hereafter will not be how much they have done, but how they have done it. When upon a narrow View and impartial Inquiry into the Motives and Principles of their good Actions, all shall be cast aside as reprobate Silver, as meer refuse and nothing worth, that hath not the stamp of Charity upon it, that is not from Love, oh how little will there remain to turn to their

their Account ! And where Charity hath had some influence upon their good Actions, yet oh how small a share, hath Charity had in the good Things which they have done, and how great a stroke have other by and sinister Motives had !

Now if you inquire how you may attain this excellent Grace of Charity :
I Answer,

I. Set your self against all those Things that are contrary to it, and destructive of it : Especially set your self against, and resist what is contrary to the Love of God, which is the root of all true and sincere Love to your Neighbour. I shall instance in three Things : The Love of the World, the Love of your Self, and the Love of any endeared Lust or darling Sin.

(I.) Set your self against the Love of this World ; the immoderate and inordinate Love thereof. The Apostle pronounceth the Love of the World to be utterly inconsistent with the Love of God. *Love not the World, nor the Things that are in the World ; if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* He who hath any acquaintance with himself, and is not too much a stranger to his own Heart, may

Matth. 6.
24.

may easily observe that as his Affection to the World increaseth, so his Love to God decreaseth, as the one riseth, so the other falls. The World steals away his Heart from God, and by insensible degrees ingrosseth all his Love to it self. The inconsistency of the Love of God and the World, our Saviour implies when he tells us, that *no Man can serve God and Mammon*. He that devotes himself to the service of Mammon, that wholly addicts himself to the eager pursuit of the Things of this World, hath too much Love for the World to have any true Love for God, and consequently any true Zeal and intire Affection to his Service. Do you therefore observe that the World gets within you, and insinuates it self into your Love and Affections? Do you find that it so takes up your Mind, and incumbers your Heart, that there is little or no room for any thing else? Beware of the further incroachments thereof, and know 'tis high time that you should look about you, and endeavour to recover your self in season. If you let the World alone, it will never have done with you, till it hath cast God out of your Heart, and gotten the full possession

possession of your Soul. As you desire to maintain and keep alive in your Heart any true Love to God, so be jealous of the World least it gain upon you, and make you wholly its own, a meer Slave and Vassal to it self. Oh how many are there who intirely give up themselves to the World, who suffer the World to have their Time, and Strength, and Parts; who yield themselves to be even swallowed up of the World, as if they were made for the World, and not the World for them, and they for the Service of God! *Who mind Earthly Things*, as the Apostle speaks *Phil. 3. 19.* that is, wholly mind them, and set their Hearts upon them.

(2.) Set your self against Self-love. As you cannot love God and the World, so you cannot love God and your Self. I speak now of Self-love as 'tis commonly taken, that is, in the worst sense, an undue and inordinate Love to our selves. Such a Self-love is that which the Apostle foretells should be, and condemns, saying, *In the last Days perilous Times shall come; for Men shall be lovers of their own selves, &c.* There is indeed such a Love of our selves as is not only allowed but enjoined, and

2 Tim. 3
1, 2.

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made the standard and measure of our Love to our Neighbour, *Matth. 19. 19. Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* The Self-love therefore which I understand, and which the Apostle condemns, is such an irregular and vicious Love of our selves, as disposeth us to mind, project and design ; to seek, drive on, and pursue our own Things without regard either of the Honour of God, or the Good of our Neighbour ; yea, without regard of our own spiritual and everlasting Good. He who thus loves himself, cannot possibly love God. Wherefore our Saviour makes the denial of our selves the first and chief Lesson to be learned by every one that will enter himself of his School, and be numbred among his Disciples. Yea, our Saviour goes so high in this matter, as to declare expressly, that he *who hateth not his own Life cannot be his Disciple* : That is, who in some Cases, when Christ shall call him thereunto, shall not so far disregard his own Life, as to be willing to lose it for his sake. In short, if you truly love God, and resolve to act and steer your course as one whose Heart is seasoned and possessed with his Love, there will be many Cases

Mat. 16.
24.

Luke 14.
26.

Cases in which you will be called to cross and deny your self, and to walk directly contrary to that Principle of inordinate Self-love, which is deeply rooted in every Man's Heart and Nature since the Fall. If you will preserve and cherish the Love of God in your Heart, oppose your self against Self-love in all the various workings and discoveries thereof.

3. Set your self generally against all Sin, but especially against your beloved and darling Sin, whatsoever it be. *Ye that love the Lord hate Evil.* The hatred of Sin, and the constant opposition we make against it, out of the hatred we bear it, as 'tis a sign and undoubted evidence of our Love to God, so 'tis a great means for preserving and increasing that Love. Our Love to Sin, to any one particular Sin, I mean such a predominant Love to any Sin as so far prevails in us, that we favour and allow our selves in it, doth not only damp and cool our Love to God, but utterly extinguish and destroy it. Sin is so contrary to the most pure and holy Nature of God, that whosoever so loves Sin as to allow himself in it, can have no true Love for God. Hence it is that Christ

Psal. 97.
10.

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makes

The First Sermon.

makes our Obedience, that is, our Care and studious Endeavour to avoid all Sin, and to perform all Duties enjoined on us, the Test and Touchstone for discovering the Truth of our Love to him. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* And again, *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.*

John 14.

15.

John 14.

21.

2. Be much in bewailing the weakness and imperfection of your Love to God : That your Love to him is so cold and faint, so fickle and inconstant : That the Things of this World, the uncertain Profits and transitory Pleasures, the empty Vanities and Trifles thereof, have so much of your Affections, and God so little : That you can mind him, meditate on him, delight in him, rejoice in him no more, while you can dwell upon the Things of the World, and take up your rest in them with so much Content and Satisfaction : That he who deserves all your Love, should have the least part of it, and that the Things which deserve no Love at all, should challenge and inhance so much. If you can heartily and frequently bewail these Disorders of your Soul, this incongruous misplacing

placing your Love and Affections, this is an Argument that you are truly displeased with your self for it, and unfeignedly desire it might be otherwise with you ; and this is a good step towards that better frame of Heart which you so much long after. *Profecisse se sciat qui cæpit sibi ipsi displicere*, Let him know, saith the Moralist, that he is now on the mending hand, who begins to be displeased with himself.

3. Earnestly beg of God more Love to him, and more Love to your Neighbour for his sake. What Suit can be more acceptable to God, than that wherein we beg of him that he would be pleased to give us to love him, and delight in him more ? What Prayer can you present unto him in which you are more sure to speed ? *This is the confidence that we have in him*, saith the Apostle, *that if we ask any Thing according to his Will he heareth us*. And certainly if this be not according to the Will of God, that we desire to love him more, no Petition can be.

1 John 5.
14.

You will say, If Love to God were so easily obtained, it would be more common in the World than 'tis.

The First Sermon.

Answ. 1. Though I say that no Prayer can be more acceptable to God, and more agreeable to his Will, than that wherein we desire that we may love him more; yet in the mean time I say not that the true Love of God is so easily obtained, I mean that eminent and victorious Love that overcomes and subdues all inordinate Love to any Thing else beside God. For,

(1.) If you will by your Prayers obtain this Love, you must beg it fervently and constantly, out of an high esteem of the Mercy you beg, and out of a deep sense of your want of it, and with earnest pantings and breathings after it: Which Things are not so common, nor so very easily obtained, as you may think they are. That such a disposition of Heart is not to be had without some Pains, will be acknowledged by any Man who knows what strangers we are to God by Nature.

(2.) All these, our high esteem of Love, the lively sense we have of our want of it, the sincerity and earnestness of our Desires after it, must be evidenced by our diligent attendance on the use of all good Means for the attaining of what we pray for. This is the

the only sufficient Proof of the uprightness of our Hearts in all the former. If we pray for Love, and use not all other Means to obtain it, we may be sure our Prayers want somewhat that is necessary to qualifie them and us for obtaining the Things which we beg in Prayer. Either you pray coldly and formally ; or you pray inconstantly, and by fits only ; or you want a keener sense of your need of more Love ; or you do not highly prize it, and earnestly pant and long after it : If all these Things accompanied your Prayers as they should do, it were impossible you should neglect the use of other Means for attaining of what you thus petition God for. No Person that had such a deep and sharp sense of his want of Love, such an high valuation of it, and such longing and fervent Desires after it, but would be doing whatsoever he could towards the attainment of it. A sluggish Temper, a lazy and slothful neglect of Means, is an infallible sign that somewhat else is not right ; that you come short and are deficient in some if not in all the Particulars last mentioned.

4. Consider, and often ponder in your Mind, what God is in himself; what he hath been to you; and what he hath further promised to be to you. The serious and frequent Consideration of these Things, especially the two latter, in which so much of God's Love to you is discovered, how can it chuse but affect your Heart with such a sense of his Love as may warm your cold Heart, and kindle in it some Love to him again? I confess no Considerations, or Endeavours, of our own will do it without the cooperation of his Spirit, and the influences of his Grace. But such is God's unspeakable Goodness, and his readiness to meet us half-way when we but endeavour to make towards him, that he is not wont to deny his Grace, where we are not wanting to our selves. We may impute it to our own Remisness, Drowsiness and Sluggishness, that he with-holds from us those assistances of his Spirit, without which all our poor Endeavours, and weak Essays, avail nothing. We are apt to complain that he is wanting to us, when we stand in our own light, and by our Idleness and Carelessness, yea by our refusing the Succours he offers

fers us, and slighting the Motions of his Spirit when ready to help our Infirmities, we thrust away from us our own Mercies, and deprive our selves of those seasonable and powerful Aids which otherwise we might enjoy. But to return to the Business in hand.

I. To stir up in your Heart Love to God, consider and often ponder in your Mind what he is in himself. What is there in all the World that is fit to be the object and attractive of Love that is not to be found in him eminently? Whatever desirable Perfections, whatever true Goodness or Loveliness in any kind may be observed in any of the Creatures, 'tis no other but what hath been conveyed to them, and bestowed on them by him; he is the Fountain, and Original; all their Goodness and Amiability are but the communications of some little portion of that Fullness that is in him; no more if compared to what is in him, than a Drop of Water is to the Ocean. Besides he is not only infinitely and independently Good and Amiable, but eternally and unchangeably so: 'Tis impossible but that he should be what he is, infinitely, unspeakably, eternally, and unchangeably

ably Lovely and Amiable. Do then any of the Creatures, or doth any thing that is in them, deserve our Love? How much more doth he? He whose Goodness and Amiableness is such as infinitely transcends the highest apprehensions of all created Understandings? Whose glorious Perfections are such as none other, beside his own infinite Understanding, can comprehend the measures of them? To what end hath he planted in us the Affection of Love, but chiefly that we should place it, and bestow it, upon himself the most proper, the most deserving, and the most excellent Object of our Love? Were it possible that we should never have received any Benefit from him, that his Goodness had not extended to us, and that we had never been made partakers of any of the Fruits thereof; had we been wholly unconcerned in his Goodness and Loveliness, further than to contemplate it, adore it, and be ravished with it, yet how could it be that we should know it, and be in any measure acquainted with it, and not love it with all that Love which our narrow Hearts, and finite Natures are capable of? We love the Vertues and Graces
of

of Persons whose Faces we never saw, and who never were nor could be in the least beneficial to us, further than that we have the pleasure of contemplating their excellent Endowments, and the advantage of proposing them to our selves as our Patterns, and of setting them before us as fair Copies to write after. Though they lived in the Ends of the Earth, or though they were dead and gone many Ages before we were born, yet we can neither read nor hear of the excellent Things that were in them, and were done by them, but we love them, and feel we have a Veneration and Reverence for them in our Hearts : So God being infinitely Good, and being eminently and transcendently whatsoever can be imagined to be most worthy of the greatest Love, though we should consider those his most amiable Perfections only absolutely and as they are in themselves, without any respect to our own Advantage, and the Benefit we have received, do or may receive from him, yet this absolute View and Contemplation of them is enough to inflame holy Affections towards him, and draw forth our Love to him. But,

2. Let

2. Let us not rest here, but often consider what he hath been to us, and what he hath done for us. Though some Men may be so bad themselves, that they have no Love for Goodness in others, unless it be extended to themselves, yet when their Goodness is diffused and communicated, when they feel the warmth of it, and taste the sweetness of it, when they are relieved, cheered and refreshed by it, then they love it. Even Self-love makes the worst Natures return some Love in such a case, as the cold Earth, and the very Stones, by reflection return some fainter Heat after they have been first warmed by the Beams of the Sun. *Peradventure for a good Man, saith the Apostle Rom. 5. 7. some would even dare to dye; for a bountiful Man, for a Benefactor, for one that hath been good not only to others but to themselves; though otherwise, scarcely for a righteous Man will one dye.* Wherefore if you find it a hard matter to love God for himself, and with respect to his absolute Goodness, yet when you shall mind and recount what he hath been to you, if you have any true Love for your self, how

how can you choose but love him who hath been so good to you?

1. He hath given you your Being, and by his Almighty Power and Goodness brought you out of nothing. Among infinite millions of Things that had a possibility of Being, if he had seen good, but shall never be, he was pleased to give you an actual Existence, and as it were to call you forth out of Nothing, from among those innumerable other Things that shall never have a Being. What he hath herein done for you, is so great a Thing as you can never sufficiently understand it. To bring any Thing out of meer Nothing, is that which our Reason stands amazed at, and cannot fully comprehend how it should ever be; only against the difficulty, and seeming impossibility of the Thing, it opposeth the Almightyness of God who can do all Things, and there it resteth, and as it were casts anchor in the dark.

2. He hath given you an excellent Being; it hath pleased him to make you the Head and not the Tail; the Master-piece of all the visible Creation; the chief and very top of all his Creatures in this inferiour World. This the Psalmist

Pfal. 8.
4, 5, 6.

Psalmist insists on in his Meditations, with holy Admiration of God's Goodness. *What is Man that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him little lower than the Angels; and hast crowned him with Glory and Honour. Thou hast made him to have Dominion over the work of thy Hands; thou hast put all Things under his Feet. He hath endowed you with a Noble and Immortal Soul, capable of the Knowledge and Fruition of himself, capable of Grace and Glory.*

Phil. 2.
7, 8.

3. He hath given his own Son, *who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, to make himself of no Reputation, to take upon him the form of a Servant, to humble himself, and to become obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross: to the end that undergoing the Punishment due to us for our Sins, he might make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and bring in everlasting Righteousness, as the Angel Gabriel declares the Design of the coming of the Messiah, Dan. 9. 24.*

4. Unto him we are indebted for all those Temporal good Things which we have enjoyed all our Days. He hath preserved us, and fed us, and
cloathed

cloathed us ; he hath provided for us, and looked after us, and disposed of us ; he hath been with us in all our Troubles, pitying us, tendering us, upholding and supporting us ; he hath rescued and delivered us out of many more Dangers than we ever understood we were in ; he hath often prevented us with his Loving-kindness, and done great Things for us before we asked them, and by Instruments from whom we least expected them. And besides all past Mercies, how many do we at present enjoy ! The use of our Reason and Understanding ; the integrity of our Limbs and Senses ; our Health, and Peace, and Liberty ; the Comforts of all our Friends and Relations ; the dayly and hourly Supplies of all needful Things, which by the hand of his good Providence he is continually reaching forth unto us ; and which is beyond all this, Pardon of Sin, Peace of Conscience, the Sense of his Favour, the Means of Grace, the Teachings, Guidance and Consolations of his Spirit, and many more spiritual Mercies than can easily be reckoned up. Whether we look within us or without us, which way soever we turn us, we still meet

meet with his Mercies, and must see them whether we will or no, unless we shut our Eyes wilfully against them. For all these Mercies, and many more than can be numbred, how can we chuse but love our great Benefactor, in whom *we live, and move, and have our being*, to whom we owe our selves, and all that we are, or have, or ever had?

3. Let us consider what God hath further promised to be to us. His Favours, and the Effects of his Bounty, are not confined to this Life; nor are they limited to some part of that which is to come, but run on to Eternity without intermission or abatement. *The Things that are seen*, and which we here enjoy, *are temporal*; but *the Things that are not seen*, the Things which we hope to be made partakers of hereafter, *are eternal*. And besides the Eternity of them, they are Things of another Nature than those in which we are wont to place our Happiness here. They are of that surpassing excellency that we cannot at this distance conceive how great they are. They are indeed shadowed out in the Scriptures by those Things

2 Cor. 4.
18.

Things which the World hath in greatest account, and most highly values: But when all is either said or done that can be to set them forth unto us, we understand but a very small portion of them, the clear and full Knowledge of them being reserved for that time when we shall enjoy them. There are in the mean time among others, these two Things especially that may help us to guess at the transcendent excellency of them.

(1.) The rich and invaluable Price with which they were purchased; and that is the Blood of Christ, the Blood of the Eternal Son of God. And how rich and glorious, think you, must that Inheritance be, which was purchased at such a rate!

(2.) The great Design of God in preparing such excellent Things for us; which was the glorifying of his Mercy eternally upon and in the Vessels of Mercy. Now if the great God will be pleased to set himself to make his own Grace and Mercy glorious to Eternity in the happy Condition unto which he will advance poor sinful Dust and Ashes, how inconceivably excellent will that Estate be, in which the Riches of the

D Glory

Glory of his Grace shall eternally shine forth! Well then, would you love God more? Would you have your Heart all on a flame, and burn with Love to him? Mind these Things, often recount them, seriously ponder them, and meditate on them. Think and think again and again how lovely and amiable God is in himself, how worthy to be the Object of all your Love: Consider what he hath been to you, and still is; how unspeakably Good and Gracious, how Kind and Bountiful; and add to all this the Consideration of what he will be to you, of the great Things he hath further prepared and laid up in store for you, and promised in due time to confer upon you.

There being such strong Inducements to Love, such weighty and forcible Considerations to work it in us, how is it that generally we have so little Love for God? How is it that Men for the most part can love any thing almost rather than him? It may seem strange that it should so be, considering how much cause we have to love God; but yet the thing is not so strange and unaccountable but that sufficient Reasons thereof may be assigned.

I. Many

1. Many do not believe much of what hath been said : They look not upon many of these Things as Realities.

2. Others who believe them in the general, cannot apply them to themselves, or lay claim to them as theirs.

3. Others who do both, who believe the Things to be real, and are not without some good perswasion and confidence of their interest in them, and claim to them, seldom take them into serious Consideration, or will be at the pains to endeavour to warm their Hearts with them, by recounting them, and meditating on them. Their Minds are too full of other matters, the World and the Things thereof so take them up, that these Things are shut out and dismissed. If now and then they can afford to bestow some few Thoughts upon them, yet O how seldom, and how coldly, is this done ! Do it frequently, and do it seriously, and then you may expect to find the Benefit thereof.

Having hitherto spoken only in the general of the unavailableness of the best Duties, and highest Performances, without Charity, I shall now add a few

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D 2

Words

Words concerning the Necessity of Charity in giving, or relieving the Distressed, that being the instance of the Text. Charity is so necessary here, as that the Relief which is bestowed upon the Indigent and Necessitous hath gotten the Name and Appellation of Charity. The very Name puts us in mind from whence the act of relieving should proceed. Of the same import it is that the same Christian Duty is in Scripture called *shewing Mercy*, as *Psal. 37. 21. Rom. 12. 8. Dan. 4. 27.* so that what we do in that kind ought to be a Fruit of that Mercy, Pity and Compassion, which we have for the Distressed. And further than 'tis so, as it cannot truly and properly be called Charity, or *shewing Mercy*, so hath it not with God either the Account, or the Acceptance, or the Reward of that Duty. I shall not need to pursue this any further, after that I have already spoken so much in general touching the Necessity of Charity in all our Duties. Only by way of more particular Application, a word or two may not be impertinent.

Use 1. This therefore may admonish all who are of Ability to relieve others,
and

and are wont to do it as Occasions are offered, especially those who are of Ability to do much this way, that they be careful that the Relief which they minister be Charity indeed, that the Grace of Charity be at the bottom, and that they be thereby stirred up and acted in what they do, without which all they do is nothing in God's esteem; yea though they should so abound in acts of this nature, as to exhaust their Estates, and impoverish themselves thereby. If they have been much exercised this way, let them not presently think that all that hath been done is Charity indeed, and will pass for such with God, before they have enquired what moved them to do what they have done, and how their Hearts stood affected therein. 'Tis possible that though much hath been given, yet little may be accepted of God as done in a due manner. 'Tis possible that the greater part of what hath been so imployed, may be as *Bread cast upon the Waters*, in another sense than that of the Wise Man, *Eccles. 11. 1.* I mean, purely lost as to any Advantage that shall thence ever redound to the Soul of the Giver. And such is,

Luke 18.
4, 5.

1. All that is wrung and extorted from Men by Importunity, much against their Will ; all that is given *of necessity*, as the Apostle's Phrase is, *2 Cor. 9. 7.* because they cannot well avoid it, which they would much rather do if they could ; all that is given rather to ease themselves, and to be rid of the Clamours and Disturbance of the Needy, than to relieve and comfort them. Thus to give hath no more acceptance with God, than the Action of the unrighteous Judge, who neither fearing God, nor regarding Man, avenged the poor Widow, because she troubled him, and left by her continual coming she might weary him.

2. Whatsoever is given Vain-gloriously, and out of an Affectation of the Praise of Men. This was the Design of those Hypocrites whom our Saviour condemns, *Matth. 6. 2.* who did their Almes *to be seen of Men* ; and to the end they might be sure to be taken notice of, and not to lose that Commendation and Applause which they sought after, they *sounded a Trumpet before them*, when they distributed their Almes. But our Saviour saith of them, and of all such, *they have their Reward ;*
the

the Applause of Men they aimed at, that they have, and that is all they must expect; for God takes no notice of what is done from such unworthy Motives, and to such base Ends, unless it be to punish them for their Vain-glory and Hypocrisie.

3. Whatsoever is given mercenarily, either out of an opinion and intention of meriting thereby, or of reaping again and procuring to themselves any temporal Advantage some other way, as the Case may sometimes be. This mercenary spirit our Saviour also censures, whether in giving or lending, and saith, it is not thank-worthy to do good where we expect to receive as much again. This is not Charity, but Self-love. Luke 6.
32, 33,
34

4. Whatsoever is given angrily, discontentedly, grudgingly and unwillingly. God loveth a chearful giver, and hath given an expresse charge that a Man's Heart should not be grieved when he giveth. *Dent. 15. 10.* In all these cases Love being not the thing that moves Men to give but somewhat else, God doth not regard the outward Action, while the inward Principle, from which it ought to flow, is wanting. 2 Cor. 9.
7

But you will say, should a Man therefore wholly omit the Duty, though the Necessities of the Distressed call aloud for it, because he observes he can seldom perform that Duty, but some sinful Corruption or other is stirring within Him?

Ans. Not so; for upon the same ground a Man might omit all Duties: What Duty can a Man at any time address himself unto, but he shall find some Corruption or other stirring and intermeddling, if he watch his Heart, and observe the workings of it narrowly? Wherefore a Man's Care must be,

1. To get a general purpose of Heart, and settled Resolution to endeavour constantly to act from Charity.

2. This Resolution should be often renewed, and upon all Occasions repeated, for the further confirming and strengthening of it.

3. In giving he should be ever mindful thereof, and labour to stir up actual Love and Compassion.

4. If any corrupt Affection be stirring and interposing, he should resist it, endeavour to suppress it, and be humbled for it, but still go on to discharge his Duty however.

5. Having

5. Having done his Duty, though with much Weakness, and not without such a mixture of sinful Imperfections and Infirmities, as for which God might justly reject it, he must look unto Christ for acceptance with God, and rest assured that God, for Christ's sake, doth mercifully overlook his Failings, and graciously accept his weak Endeavours.

Use 2. What hath been spoken concerning Charity in giving, is matter of great Encouragement to those whose Hearts are much larger than their Ability. They can give but little, but that little proceeding from the greatness of their Love, is undoubtedly more valued by God than a hundred times as much where Charity is scanty and narrow, and though the Hand be opened wide, yet the Heart is shut up. We know in what account Christ had the poor Widows Mite, *Luke 21. 4.* looking more at the Heart and Affection of the Giver, than at her Gift. Say that you can give but a Mite, but a Farthing, yet if your Heart be full of Love, and you would gladly do greater Matters if your Ability would reach them, quiet and comfort your self in having done sincerely
and

and compassionately that little which you were able. Sincere Love and hearty Affection goes a great way in God's Valuation, setting an high rate upon small things. We are apt to judge of Things by the bulk and quantity, he judgeth of them and measures them by the quality, by the disposition and affection of the Person from whom they come. Charity is all in all with him; be sure that you be not defective in this, and then you need not question your acceptance, whether you can do little or much.

And so from the Apostle's Instance of Doing, I go on to his Instance of Suffering; *Though I give my Body to be burnt and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.* By which high Instance he gives us to understand, that the greatest Sufferings without Charity are nothing. An higher Instance could not easily be given than this in the Text. In which two Things are to be noted.

1. That he saith, *Though I give my Body to be burnt*; which imports a free act on the part of the Sufferer, offering himself to undergo so grievous and formidable a Death.

2. And

2. And this is supposed to be undergone upon the account of Religion also ; so much is implied : For so the Apostle's Instance hath an higher force and emphasis, which is most suitable to his present Design, which was to shew the absolute Necessity of Charity, and how utterly insignificant and unavailing the highest Performances or Sufferings are without it. If a Man should voluntarily offer and expose himself to the most exquisite Torments, or to the most painful and terrible Death upon the account of Religion, to wit, rather than he would renounce the Truth, and disclaim his Profession, and all this should be from a desire of Vain-glory, and to get the Name, Honour and Reputation of a Martyr after his Death, without any Love to God, or Respect to his Glory ; and without any true Zeal for the Truth, or Love to the Professors thereof, his Sufferings would be nothing worth, they would have no valuation or acceptance with God. 'Tis not what Men suffer, that God looks after, but how they suffer, from what Motives, and to what Ends. If Charity, true Love to God, to the Truth of God, and to their Brethren be not the motive

motive that puts upon Suffering, and the Glory of God, the confirmation and sealing of the Truth, and the establishing of the Professors of it, be not their End, all their Sufferings are lost. They must never expect any Reward at the Hands of God, though they may have from Men that poor and empty Reward they had in their Eye; Men may honour and applaud them, but what good will the Praise of Men do them, while *that which is highly esteemed amongst Men, is abomination in the sight of God.* And certainly their greatest Sufferings are so, and no better in his sight, when they make themselves in the worst sense, their own Praise and Glory, instead of the Glory of God, the End of them.

Use 1. Let such as please themselves in their Sufferings, and are forward to glory of them, inquire whether they suffer out of Love, whether it be Charity that ingageth them to suffer. They who find they are apt to pride themselves in their Sufferings, and boast of them, have much reason to suspect that the itch of Ostentation and Vain-glory, may have had a greater hand in their Suf-

Sufferings, than Charity. You may think you suffer out of Charity, but take heed you be not deceived. Our Times have produced Men of strange Ways and Principles, I mean the *Quakers*, whom no Sufferings can reduce from their wild, most absurd, and most dangerous Opinions and Practises: And yet none are more bitter and uncharitable, against all those who are not of their number, than these Men are; allowing none to be in the way to Heaven, or in the state of Salvation, but themselves. These People may do well to consider what the Apostle here saith, *If I give my Body to be burnt, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

But to pass by these who will not come to hear what concerns them, even they who suffer for Righteousness sake, and for the Testimony of a good Conscience, if they look into themselves, may see cause of bewailing the Defects of their Love. How heavily, uncheerfully, and discontentedly, many times do they suffer! How much impatience, fretting and murmuring, is there! What inward grudgings and risings of their Hearts, against the Instruments of their Sufferings! What Evil-speaking, what bitter

bitter and reproachful Language is there! All which Distempers and Miscarriages more Love would have prevented, or in some good measure have abated.

Use 2. As therefore you may at any time be called to suffer, see that Charity be the root and principle, the motive and incentive of your Suffering. The Advantages of Love in reference to Suffering, are great.

1. Love will enable a Man to suffer willingly, and out of choice, rather than dishonour God, or violate his Conscience. Thus did *Moses* rather choose to suffer Afflictions with the People of God, out of his intire Love and Affection to them, *than to enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a season.* And the like did those other Servants of God, who being tortured, would not accept of deliverance, that is to say, upon any such unworthy terms, as were not consistent with their Love to Christ, the Honour of Religion, and the Peace of their Consciences.

2. Love will make a Man suffer chearfully and gladly, as did the Apostles, who rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. And

Heb. 11.
25.

ver. 35.

Acts 5.
41.

And those Christians, *Heb. 10. 34. took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods.*

3. Love will make a Man patient and meek-spirited under his Sufferings. So our Saviour coming to lay down his Life out of Love to Sinners, how meek, quiet, and patient was he! *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his Mouth: He was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a Sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth. When he was reviled, he reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatened not.* Isa. 53. 7.
1 Pet. 2. 23.

4. Love will cause a Man to be charitably affected towards those by whom he suffers. So again, our Saviour being full of Love, prayed for them that crucified him, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* So St. Stephen, treading in his Saviour's steps, prayed for them that stoned him, saying, *Lord, lay not this Sin to their charge.* Luke 23. 24.
Acts 7. 60. So the Apostles, as St. Paul in the name of the rest, speaks for them all, *Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat.* 1 Cor. 4. 12, 13.

But here perhaps you may be ready to interpose, I fear I have not Love enough to suffer for Christ, if I should be

be thereunto called. The very thoughts of Sufferings, tho' at a distance, make me shrink and even quake before hand: What should I do if Sufferings were near?

Mark 14.

33.

Luke 22.

44.

2. 22. 1

Eph. 3.

19.

Ans. Some Fears, yea great Fears of Sufferings, may consist with Love enough to suffer. Our Saviour was amazed when his Sufferings drew near: He did sweat drops of Blood, out of extream Fear and Consternation of Spirit; yet had he Love enough to suffer for us, else we had all been for ever miserable. His great Fears were so far from being inconsistent with Love enough to suffer, that the greatness of his Fears sets forth the greatness and ardency of his Love, which was strong enough to overcome those Fears. 'Tis true, his Love was a matchless, an incomparable Love, *a Love that passeth Knowledge.* Our greatest Love, what is it to his? But however, a little true and sincere Love may carry you on to suffer when the time comes, notwithstanding your Fears. For your Incouragement, consider,

1. That your distrust of your self is a good sign. 'Tis much better that you should distrust your self, than be self-confident.
2. Weak

2. Weak and fearful Christians, when they have come to the tryal, have held out, when those who have had much vain confidence of their strength, have shamefully fallen, and denied Christ, or renounced his Truths.

3. If God call you to suffer, he can and will give you Strength to suffer, if you be not wanting to your self in seeking it earnestly of him.

4. The more you are afraid that you have not Love enough to enable you to suffer, the more it concerns you to press hard after a greater measure of Love.

And so much concerning the Necessity of Charity, without which, neither our Performances, nor our Sufferings, avail us.

I now go on with the Text, as it followeth *Verse 4.*

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E

SERMON

I have been thinking of you very much lately
 and wondering how you are getting on.
 I hope you are well and happy.
 I have been very busy lately
 but I will write to you again soon.
 I love you very much.
 Your affectionate friend,
 John

SERMON II.

I COR. xiiij. 4.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind ; Charity envieth not ; Charity vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up.

THE Apostle having spoken of the Necessity of Charity, in the three former Verses, now goes on to commend this Grace unto us from the Properties and Effects of it ; some of which he reckons up in this Verse, the rest follow afterwards. Now concerning these Properties of Charity, some Things may be observed in the general, before I descend to speak of them particularly, as they offer themselves in the Text.

1. These Properties are such, as 'tis evident that the Charity which the Apostle here describes and characteriseth, is that which respects Men : For he all

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along

along sets forth the nature of Charity, with relation to our carriage towards Man, and our deportment towards one another. But yet however, in our Charity towards our Neighbour, our Love to God is implied, and necessarily supposed. No Man loves his Brother as he ought, but he who loves him in relation to God, for his sake, and upon his account. And this,

Lev. 19.
18.

Matth. 5.
44.

(1.) With respect to God's Command, and in Obedience thereunto. God hath enjoined him to love his Neighbour as himself; to love his very Enemies, and out of Love to do them any good Office; *Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*

(2.) Because he resembles God, and bears his Image; at least in respect of his Natural Perfections and Endowments, especially the Dignity, Immortality, and excellent Faculties of his Soul. And if he be one who is regenerated, he is moreover renewed after the Image of God in *Righteousness and true Holiness*, as the Apostle speaks, *Eph. 4. 23, 24.* and in that regard ought he to have so much the more Love from him:

him ; and the more still as he shall come still more to resemble God in that which is the chief part of his Image in Man.

2. Whereas these Properties of Charity are many, we may observe that divers of them are so nearly allied, and of so near affinity to one another, that 'tis not easie to distinguish them exactly, or to say any thing of one of them, that may not as properly fall under some other of them : As for Example, That *Charity suffereth long*, ver. 4. *is not easily provoked*, ver. 5. *beareth all things, endureth all things*, ver. 7. And as 'tis hard to determine precisely wherein these do differ, so perhaps 'tis not very necessary that we should perfectly and exactly distinguish or difference them. For why might not the Apostle use divers words and expressions almost of the same importance, and signifying much the same thing, the more fully to express his sense, and set forth the nature of the Grace he was discoursing of ? Thus we know the Scriptures often describe and set forth the same Thing by variety of Expressions, all tending to the same Purpose, and signifying the

same Thing. Neither is this done without respect to our Benefit several ways.

(1.) Hereby the Things treated of, are conveyed into our Understandings with greater evidence and clearness.

(2.) We are also more affected with the Things by the redoubled impressions that are made, while they beat and rebeat upon our Minds, under those various terms by which they are express'd.

(3.) As to the design of the Apostle in this large description of Charity, by so many Properties and Effects thereof, we may well conceive that though he chiefly intended to commend Charity unto them, to make them the more in love with it, and the more effectually to stir them up to labour after it ; yet he had also other subordinate and less principal Ends therein. While he thus describes the nature and properties of Charity, and how it frames and disposeth the Hearts and Carriage of Men towards their Brethren, 'tis probable that he thereby further intended ;

1. Indirectly, and by the way, to tax the *Corinthians* for their contrary Carriage towards each other, whereby they bewrayed their want of, or great deficiency

ciency in this Grace, how much soever they abounded in Gifts.

2. To help them and all others, to try the truth and measure of their Charity by these characters and properties thereof.

3. To lay before them, and all other Christians, the chief Offices and Duties of Charity, which all should make Conscience of, and endeavour to perform; and especially those who would be thought to have attained greater measures of that Grace, than many others. And so much in the general: I come now to speak of the several Properties of Charity in order as they lye in the Text. This one Verse contains five of those Properties; of which the first is, *That Charity suffereth long. Divina planè Charitatis descriptio profecta ex pectore ejus pleno*: A Divine Description of Charity, proceeding from a breast that was full of it, saith a Learned Man. None could better describe Charity than *St. Paul*, whose Heart was so full of Love to Christ, and Love to the Saints, and Love to all Men, whose spiritual and everlasting Good he so affectionately and ardently desired, and so industriously and restlessly indeavoured to

promote. He who had felt all the several workings of Love within himself, and had externally acted to the life all the parts and offices of Love, in relation to all sorts of Men with whom he had to do, could teach us from his own Experience, what were the proper operations and effects of Love. And when we shall once have had experience of the force, the vertues and efficacy, of this admirable Grace in our selves, then shall we also bear him witness, and be able to set our seal to it, that he hath described it aright, and given us a true character of it. *It suffereth long*; *μακροθυμεί*, the word that is ordinarily used for long-suffering in the New Testament, as 2 Cor. 6. 6. Gal. 5. 22. Eph. 4. 2. and in divers other places. And the same word sometimes is rendred by having Patience, so Matth. 18. 26, 29. and by bearing long, as Luke 18. 7. In speaking of this property of Charity, I shall say something of the objects of Long-suffering, as also of the manner how Long-suffering is to be exercised about those objects; and then I shall shew that 'tis the nature of Charity to suffer long; and lastly, apply all.

1. As to the objects of Long-suffering, or the things about which 'tis conversant, little need be spoken. 'Tis manifest, that Suffering long hath relation to things that are irksome, burthen-some, and grievous to be born, or suffered : For if we met with no such things, there would be no place for Long-suffering, nor any need or use thereof. That which is the object of Long-suffering, hath something of incumbrance, trouble or molestation, in it ; such are, Unkindnesses and Discourtesies, Personal Injuries, the sinful Infirmities, and the more foul and gross Miscarriages of others. Now as these objects are of a different nature, so must Long-suffering be differently exercised about them. I must therefore speak of them severally, and apart.

(1.) As for Unkindnesses, if they be small, and inconsiderable, we should not at all mind them or regard them, but pass them by, as if no such thing were. To be as it were lying ever at the catch, to observe narrowly and take hold of every little Discourtesie, to make it matter of Debate and Controversie, is far from that Long-suffering which is a property of Love. We shew
we

we have but very little Love or Forbearance for Men, when we are so ready to pick Quarrels with them upon every slight Occasion. And though Unkindnesses should be great and many, yet we should suffer long and much in that kind, even in reference to those of whom we have deserved better Things.

1. Taking as little notice of such Unkindnesses as we can, much less breaking off, and omitting offices of Love and Kindness upon that account, but rather still endeavouring, by our continued Kindness, to overcome their Unkindness, and by frequent offices of Love as any occasion is offered, to win them to a friendly Correspondence.

2. Neither should we allow our selves to harbour or cherrish in our Hearts any secret Animosities or Grudgings against them, by reason of such Unkindnesses, but labour to keep our Hearts in as charitable a frame towards them, as if they had never given us any Cause to the contrary. This is indeed to suffer long, when we shall, notwithstanding many Unkindnesses, not only endeavour to bridle our Tongues, and withhold the outward Man from all external acts of Displeasure, but to keep our
Hearts

Hearts likewise under such government, as there may be no allowance of any inward Distemper contrary to Charity. If this seem difficult, if it be hard thus to exercise Long-sufferance, in case of meer Unkindnesses, how shall we be able to do it in case of palpable Injuries? Which is the next Thing to be spoken to.

The wrongful and injurious Carriage of Men towards us, is much more difficult to be born, and yet here also Love will both teach and enable us to suffer long, quietly and undisturbedly; to bear not only one or two Injuries, but many. So to bear them, as,

1. Not to be easily transported with unruly Passions and sinful Distempers against the Persons who injure us.

2. Not to attempt or meditate the revenging of our selves upon them.

3. Neither to take up any fixed and irreconcilable Displeasure against them.

4. Neither to cease to wish well to them, and to be ready to do them any Good we can. All this is required of us, and enjoined us in those Scriptures in which we are commanded to be *patient towards all Men*, 1 Theff. 5. 14. *To be gentle, and to shew all Meekness unto*

unto all Men, Tit. 3. 2. Not to avenge, nor bear any Grudge against our Neighbour, Levit. 19. 18. To render to no Man evil for evil, 1 Theff. 5. 15. To love our Enemies, and do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us, Matth. 5. 44. Not to be overcome with evil, but to overcome evil with good, Rom. 12. 21.

3. The Infirmities of our Brethren are another object of our Long-suffering. By Infirmities, I understand such sinful Weaknesses as they who are subject to them, do not allow themselves in, but judge and condemn themselves for them, and strive against them. Some of these Infirmities are such as are very troublesome, and hard to be born by such as are about them, and familiarly converse with them. But seeing they are their Infirmities, that is to say, such Things as are an Affliction and a Burthen to themselves, which they desire to be rid of, our Long-sufferance in reference to them, is a Duty so much the more necessary, and indispensable; and so much the more agreeable to that Love which we owe them, in regard of our near relation to them as the Members

bers of Christ, together with our selves. These their Infirmities are so to be born, as that,

i. We overlook many of them, and neither in our Speech or Demeanour towards them at all reflect on them. For when they are Things which we have all reason to believe they severely censure in themselves, what need is there of our Censures and rigid Animadversions? unless we be such as take delight in being much abroad, imperiously and masterly correcting and censuring others, which is commonly the Temper of those who are too well conceited of themselves, and are too little at home, too little exercised in looking into their own Hearts and Ways, and passing Sentence on themselves for whatsoever they can, upon the narrowest and most impartial search, discern to have been amiss. To be always or often pecking at the pure Infirmities of others, and exercising the utmost severity of our Censures on them, is a carriage which discovers we have little of that Long-sufferance, which the Apostle makes to be the property of Charity, and consequently as little of the Grace of Charity it self.

2. These

2. These Infirmities are so to be born, as we do not thereupon estrange our selves from them, much less withdraw or renounce Communion with them.

Rom. 14.

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Rom. 15.

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Him that is weak in the Faith receive, saith the Apostle : And we that are strong ought to bear the Infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves. Now there are several ways in which Christians may sinfully please themselves, in reference to their weaker Brethren.

(1.) When they that are strong, or think themselves so to be, either in Knowledge or Grace, reflect upon themselves and upon their own Things with self-admiration, and in comparison of themselves despise others.

(2.) They may sinfully please themselves, by placing themselves in the Seat of Judgment as it were, uncharitably censuring and condemning their weaker Brethren, as they suppose them, who yet upon a just Scrutiny or Inquiry, may be found to be stronger than themselves.

(3.) They may also sinfully please themselves in with-drawing of themselves from them, avoiding their company, and disclaiming Christian Society and Converse with them, only upon
account.

account of their Infirmities ; and that either because those Infirmities being burthensome, and not very easie to be born, by renouncing Communion and Acquaintance with them, they ease themselves of the trouble of them ; or because having an high esteem for themselves, they judge it beneath them to hold and maintain Communion with Persons labouring under, and blemished with such Infirmities. Thus to please our selves in disowning our weak Brethren, and shunning Communion with them upon account of their Infirmities, is not to be like God, and to imitate him ; for *God receiveth them*, he acknowledged and owns them for his, Rom. 14. 3. notwithstanding their Infirmities : Neither is it to be like Christ, and to imitate him ; for in undertaking and carrying on the work of our Redemption, he *pleased not himself*, but denied himself, *made himself of no reputation, taking upon him the form of a servant, and humbling himself to death, even the death of the Cross.* Rom. 15. 3. Phil. 2. 7, 8.

3. When their Infirmities are of a dangerous nature, and against which they do not oppose themselves as is requisite they should, tho' they ought to

to be admonished yet that Duty should be performed as with all gentleness and meekness, so likewise with Long-sufferance also : In case we should meet with some obstinacy of Spirit, and gain-saying for some time at first, this should neither make us weary of our Duty, nor transport us with such Distempers as may render us unfit to discharge it. 'Tis not for the most part to be expected, that Men should presently be cured of their Infirmities. Sometimes we shall find them off the hinges, and not in a case to receive Admonition as is meet, in respect of some present Distemper ; sometimes we may find them so blinded with Self-love and Partiality to themselves, that nothing that can be said will be sufficient to convince them of their Miscarriages ; and however it be, the Cure ordinarily goes on but slowly, so that he who cannot expect the issue of many Admonitions with some good measure of Patience and Long-sufferance, is not likely to see the fruits of his Endeavours in the recovery of the Patient. How necessary this Long-sufferance is in reference to the Infirmities of others, will be readily acknowledged by every truly
humble

humble Christian, who seeing and feeling his own manifold and great Infirmities, cannot but be sensible of the great need he hath of the Patience and Long-sufferance of others. I shall therefore shut up this particular with that of the Apostle, Gal. 6. 1, 2. *If a Man be over-taken with a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thy self least thou also be tempted. Bear ye one anothers burthens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ.*

So I pass on to the fourth Object of our Long-suffering, which is in some sense to be extended even to the more enormous Sins, and fouler Miscarriages of Men. 'Tis true, there will be need of some Caution here.

1. Our Long-suffering, in reference to these Sins, must not be such as that we forbear to reprove Men for them. This is a Duty we owe them, the neglect whereof shews we have little Love for them; and as little regard of the Command of God, expressly and pre-emptorily enjoining it: *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.* Lev. 19. 17.

Rom. 13.
4.

2. Neither must our Long-suffering be such, as that we forbear to punish them, if we be those who have a Lawful Power enabling us thereunto. The Magistrate especially, who is intrusted with the Sword, is the *Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil*; and therefore must *not bear the Sword in vain*. And so also Parents, and whosoever else have a rightful Power over others, they have an Obligation lying upon them, to exert and use their Power as there shall be cause, for the restraining and punishing of Sin, in those whom the Providence of God hath placed under their Care, Inspection and Government. And this is so far from being contrary to Charity, or that Long-suffering which is a Fruit of Charity, that 'tis one of the greatest and highest Offices of Love. To save a Soul from Hell, by seasonable and wholesome Severities to endeavour to stop your erring Brother in his desperate course of Sin, by a merciful violence to pull him as a Brand out of the Fire, and to rescue his Soul from everlasting Ruine, what Love is comparable with this? But yet however
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there will be place for Long-suffering here also. And this,

(1.) In waiting for their Repentance, not hastily despairing of their Recovery, or giving them over as Reprobates, because they have hitherto obstinately and perversly withstood the Means of their Conversion.

(2.) Going on and persevering still in the use of all good Means for gaining them to Christ.

(3.) In all our Endeavours, in all our Treaties with them about the Things that concern their Souls, using as much mildness and gentleness as the nature of their Offences will bear, and as will consist with, and really promote our End, their Conviction, Conversion and Salvation.

So having spoken of the several Objects of our Long-suffering, and shewed how Long-suffering is to be exercised about those Objects; it now follows that I further shew briefly, that 'tis the nature of Love thus to suffer long. And this may be at once both confirmed and illustrated by a double Instance, that of the Love of God to his People, and that of the Love of Parents to their Children.

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i. That

1. That God's Love to his Children discovers it self in Suffering long, is manifest by the Experience of all God's Children, who cannot but with Thankfulness and Admiration acknowledge it. We may see this his Long-suffering admirably displayed in his dealing with his ancient People the *Jews*.

(1.) They had greatly provoked him
 Jer. 3. 5. by their Sins : They had spoken and
 done as evil Things as they could :
 Jer. 2. They had done worse than the very
 10, 11. Heathens. And as the quality of their
 Sins, so their number had highly in-
 Jer. 5. 6. censed God. *Their Transgressions were
 many, and their Backslidings were in-
 Jer. 2. 20. creased. Upon every high hill, and un-
 der every green tree, they had been play-
 ing the harlot. No place was free from
 Jer. 2. 28. their abominable Idolatries : According
 to the number of their Cities were their
 Gods.*

(2.) These horrid Sins they had long
 Jer. 2. 32. continued in. *They had forgotten God
 days without number.*

(3.) These Sins had been grievously
 aggravated, divers ways.

1. In regard they had been commit-
 ted against so much Kindness, against
 so many Favours and signal Mercies
 con-

conferred on them. *Them only had he* Amos 3.
known of all the Families of the Earth. 2.

He had done such Things for them as for no other People under Heaven, and enriched them with such Priviledges as no other Nation in the whole World could glory in. That they should be so Bad, so desperately Wicked, unto whom God had been so Good, this was that which made their Sins exceeding sinful; and therefore God expostulating with them, insists on their unkindness, as the thing which he most resented, and took most nearly to Heart.

What Iniquity have your Fathers found Jer. 2. 5.
in me, saith the Lord, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after Vanity? What have I done to them? Or wherein have I deserved so ill at their hands, that they should cast off me, and betake themselves to strange Gods? Have I ever given them any Cause to deal thus with me? And so again afterwards at the 31th Verse of the same Chapter; Have I been a Wilderiness to Israel? A Land of Darknes? Wherefore say my People, we will come no more unto thee?

2. The Means of Grace, and many Calls and Invitations to Repentance,

Jer. 7.
13.

Jer. 7.
25, 26.

which God had afforded them, were a further aggravation of their Sin. By the Ministry of his Prophets and other Servants, God was ever dealing with them in order to their Reformation, but all to no purpose. *I spake unto you, saith the Lord, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and called, but ye answered not. Since the day that your Fathers came forth out of the Land of Egypt unto this day, I have even sent unto you all my servants the Prophets, daily rising up early and sending them; yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but they hardened their neck, and did worse than their Fathers.* What could they have done more to fill up the measure of their Sins, and hasten their Destruction? How wonderful a thing is it that God had not utterly cast them off, and rejected them many Years, or rather many Ages, before the Captivity came upon them? But so strange and admirable was God's Long-sufferance towards them, that still he waited, and waited, and waited for their Repentance; and ceased not to offer them Mercy to the last, upon condition of their return to him. *Jeremiah* was the last of the Prophets that pro-

propheſied before the Captivity : and yet by him he proclaims in their Ears, *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, the God Jer. 7. 3. of Iſrael, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cauſe you to dwell in this Land. If ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings ; if ye thoroughly execute Judgment between a Man and his Brother, if ye oppreſs not the Stranger, the Fatherleſs, and the Widow, and ſhed not innocent Blood in this place, neither walk after other Gods to your hurt ; then will I cauſe you to dwell in this place, in the Land which I gave to your Fathers ; in the 5th, 6th and 7th Verſes.*

Amend your ways and your doings, and Jer. 26. obey the voice of the Lord your God, and 13. the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced againſt you. But notwithstanding all the offers of Mercy that were made them, they ſtill perſiſting in their Impenitency and Obſtinacy ; when there was no Remedy, as God ſpeaks 2 Chron. 36. 16. and not till then, he brought upon them thoſe Judgments which he had ſo long threatened, but ſtill in expectation of their Repentance, had forbore to inflict. And when there was no Remedy but that his Threatenings muſt be fulfilled, yet

Jer. 12. 7.

how unwilling was he to proceed to that Severity, which unless they would by their Repentance have prevented it, could not be avoided ! *I have forsaken my house, I have left my heritage, saith he, I have given the dearly beloved of my Soul into the hands of the Enemies.*

As if he had said, nothing can be more against my Heart, than thus to deal with a People so dear unto me : But they put me to it, and will not by their Humiliation and Reformation, give me an Opportunity of shewing Mercy. So when *Ephraim*, that is, the Ten Tribes, had highly provoked God to cast them off, and give them up to the Power of their Enemies, to lay their Land desolate, what an affectionate Conflict had he with himself about it ! *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim ? How shall I deliver thee, Israel ? How shall I make thee as Admah ? How shall I set thee as Zeboim ? Mine Heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.*

Hos. 11.

8.

And thus I have shewed that 'tis the nature and property of Love to suffer long, from this unparalleled instance of God's long sufferance to his People, and this out of the Love that he bare them.

2. This may also be confirmed and
illustra-

illustrated by the workings of Love in Parents towards their Children ; which was the other Instance I propounded to be spoken to. I shall not here say much, nor is it needful. None can be ignorant what long sufferance the Love of Parents makes them exercise towards their Childen. How many miscarriages and misdemeanours do they pass by and overlook ! How many affronts and indignities do some Parents quietly put up ! How long do they patiently wait for, and expect their Childrens amendment ! How unwearied are they in Offices of Love, and all manner of discoveries of Parental Affection, notwithstanding all the ill requitals that are made them ! When they are most justly displeased, yet how soon is their displeasure blown over ! If they be angry with them at Night, they are again reconciled to them in the Morning : and sooner also it may be, if any thing appear in them that doth but look like submission. If at any time their provocations come to be so high and daring, and so obstinately and incurably persisted in, that they threaten to disown them and cast them off, yet how often is this threatned before 'tis done ? Or if at length

length the Doors be shut upon them, yet how soon are they opened to let them in again ! What small things doth Parental Love accept of at their hands, in order to their readmission, and the closing up of the breach ! How glad is it to take hold of any thing that is capable of being made but a colour for shewing kindness to them again ! If *Abfaloms* high misdemeanours make him consult his safety by flying away from his Fathers House, and betaking himself to the King of *Geshur* for protection : after some time how easily doth *David* forget all that was past, and lay aside his displeasure against him ? How doth his Soul long to receive him into Favour again ? And how acceptable is *Joabs* contrivance, and the Woman of *Tekoah's* intercession in his behalf ? 2 *Sam.* 13 and 14 Chapters. 'Tis true, there was here a great excess and inordinacy of Affection : *Davids* Love towards his darling *Abfalom*, was a fond and immoderate Love, for which he paid dearly afterwards : but yet however we therein see what the Nature of Love is, and in what manner it works towards the object beloved. And so in this instance also of the Love of Parents to their
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their Children, we see that 'tis the property of Love to suffer long. I now proceed to make some Application of what hath been said.

Use 1. And this in the first place may discover to us how little true Charity we have to one another. If it be the property of Charity to suffer long, how weak and cold is our Charity, who can suffer so little from each other, with any even-ness or equability of Spirit? To instance briefly in all the several objects of long-suffering before mentioned.

1. For Unkindnesses, how small and inconsiderable soever almost they be, how do they work on us and stick by us! Yea the meer appearance of some unkindness, the bare apprehension and suspicion we have thereof upon some mistake, what ill effects hath it upon us! An unadvised expression, or a word unwittingly and without any ill intent misplaced, or the neglect of some Ceremony of respect, not from want of love or esteem for our Persons, but either from forgetfulness, or inadvertency, or some unavoidable impediment, what jealousies doth it beget in us! What inward

ward displeasure, and secret alienation of Affections? An uncheerful and cloudy Countenance, a more composed and serious look, less freedom and affability in Discourse then hath been usual, tho' perhaps upon the most just grounds, and from such inward troubles as are only known to themselves, yet how do they estrange our Hearts from them! And how apt are we to interpret all these as the effects of unkindness and displeasure against us! And presently running away with this mistake, to take up displeasure against them, and to return real unkindness for that which was but imaginary, and which never had any other being than in our own phantasies! But if unkindness be real, manifest and undeniable; and those many, and often repeated, and that where kindnesses have been done, and better requitals might have been expected; then we are so far from suffering long, that we are out of all patience: then we think we have all reason to bear no longer with them, but utterly to disclaim all Friendship, and terms of Amity with them, and to have no more to do with them: Then we lay about us, and appeal to every Man we meet with, whether ever there were the

the like ingratitude as that which hath been shewed us ; and whether we have not just cause to have the highest resentment thereof, and to take up a Resolution never to prostitute our kindneses to the abuse of such ungrateful Persons any more. But in the meantime where is our Charity that suffereth long, that returns kindneses for unkindneses, and overcomes evil with good ? We cannot bare unkind returns from those who have been obliged by us ; but how many ill requitals are by us made unto God, who yet still goes on to do us good, and is ever heaping new Favours on us Day by Day, notwithstanding all that we have done, and are still doing to to disoblige him !

2. As for injuries, in reference to these we are much more unable to suffer long. Here many of us can bear nothing. If any Man will injure us, he must expect to have as good as he brings. And where our Arms are short, so that we cannot reach those who have wronged us, yet we have never the less mind to do it, our Hearts meditate Revenge, though our Hands cannot Act it ; and 'tis our greatest trouble that our power is not proportionable to our Malice.

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And seeing we cannot come at those who have injured us, we are glad if any Man else will reach them a blow ; 'tis some content and satisfaction to our Revenge, to see any Mischief befall them from any other hand. Surely Charity that suffereth long, hath not taken up its residence in these Mens Breasts. 'Tis impossible that this patient Grace should dwell in a revengeful Heart. The Charity of such as these is not little, but none at all. Not one dram of true Charity can consist with a Spirit of Revenge, or be found in that malicious Heart that allows it self to design, study, plot and contrive Revenge.

But to set aside these, the best, if they look into their Hearts, and observe how they stand affected towards these from whom they have received Injuries, may see cause enough to bewail and be humbled for their want of such measures of this Grace as might keep their Hearts in better order. Though they dare neither to act nor to contrive Revenge, yet their inward Corruption ferments, and their Hearts rise against them from whom they have suffered : They cannot bear them hearty Goodwill, nor have they such a freeness and
readiness

readiness to do them any Good, as they ought to have, though they dare not do them any hurt. And if by the Providence of God any Calamity befall them, it may be they are rather well-pleased therewith, than troubled at it: so far are they from a compassionate sympathizing with them in their Afflictions. I grant they will not own so vile a Distemper, nor make any discovery of it to others, but however it secretly harbours and lurks in their Hearts. Search narrowly, and see if it be not so; or if it should not be so in some particular Instance, where God mightily keeps under and over-powers Corruption by his Grace, yet observe if it be not so in other Instances. Now O how little is our Love to those Persons, whose Calamities we rather secretly rejoice in and are glad of, than take to Heart! This is so far from being a fruit of Charity that suffereth long, that 'tis little better than a spice of Revenge. Let no Man who makes account he loves his Brother, cherish such an uncharitable Distemper in his Heart; yea, let no Man who loves himself cherish it, remembering what *Solomon* saith, *Prov. 17. 5. He that is*
glad

glad at Calamities shall not be unpunished.

3. Neither do we better acquit our selves in bearing the Infirmities of others. How nice, coy, and squeamish, are we here ! How much Offence do we often take at small Weaknesses in others, while we over-look, and favourably pass by far greater and juster matters of Offence in our selves ! How severe and harsh are the Censures which we pass upon them ! Add hereunto, that we so narrowly observe and spy out the Infirmities of others ; that we are so glad when we light on them ; that we are so well skilled in the art of aggravating them and heightening them ; that we have such a faculty of magnifying them, and representing them with the greatest Advantage, to make them appear much greater than in truth they are ; that instead of concealing them, we so gladly take any occasion of divulging them, or at least of whispering them into the Ears of those who can as little cover or conceal them as our selves ; in a word, that almost in all Places and Companies we so gladly dwell and inlarge upon this Theme, there being scarce any thing which too
many

many Christians either speak of more gladly, or listen to more willingly, than the Infirmities of others.

I need not say how contrary all this is to the nature of Love, and to that Long-sufferance that is a property thereof. Charity would make us less captious and critical in spying out and observing the Infirmities of others, less severe in censuring them, more patient in bearing them, more sparing in speaking of them, more willing to cover them. We love our selves so well that thus we stand affected in reference to our own Infirmities, and so likewise in reference to the Infirmities of those who are nearly related to us ; I mean, if they be those whom we dearly and intirely love, and who have a special interest in our Affections. The Infirmities of these we are so far from delighting to pry into, that we turn away our Eyes from them, and are unwilling to see them ; and when we cannot but take notice of them, we are so favourable as to apprehend them to be less than they are, rather than greater ; and as for the itch of divulging them, there is so little of this, that we do all that we can to conceal them. And if others

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take notice of them, we are ready to make the best Excuses and Apologies that we are able, that seeing they cannot be altogether hid from other Mens Eyes, yet as much of the Evil of them may be concealed as is possible. And if we loved others that are a little more remote from us, as well as we love our selves, and those that are near us, would not the effects of our Love be the same? 'Tis therefore from what hath been spoken, too apparent that we have but a very little Charity for any but our selves, and some few others that are so near us, as that they may in some sense be accounted a part of our selves, and consequently our Love to them little other than Love to our selves.

4. As for the more enormous Faults and Irregularities of others who are of a vicious and profligate Life, certainly it cannot in reason be well supposed that we should have more true Love and Charity for these, than we have for those who sin through Infirmary. Our want of Charity that suffers long in reference to these is most visible, in that we are so quickly weary of waiting for their Reformation; in that we are so easily perswaded, after a little unsuccessful

cessful Pains taken with them, to look upon them as incurable, and desperate, such as we may not hope that ever any Good will be done upon them: In that because God is not presently prevailed with to change their Hearts, we are so ready to conclude that he never will do it; and thereupon cast them out of our Prayers, and forbear to give our selves any further trouble in making use of any other Means for gaining them. This is indeed a short way to be rid of them, and to ease our selves of the labour of endeavouring their Conversion. But Charity would not be so quick; that would suffer long, and wait long in the use of Means, and never be weary of waiting, *if God peradventure might at any time be pleased to give Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth.*

Use 2. If to suffer long be the property of Love, let us be exhorted to endeavour to evidence the truth and sincerity of our Love by Long-suffering. Let us not give up our selves to be transported with those inordinate Passions, which Persons void of Charity are subject to. Let neither Unkindnesses nor Injuries so work upon us as

to put us out of order, or make us meditate, contrive or act any thing contrary to Charity. Let us bear the Infirmities of the weakest of Saints, and wait for the Repentance of the worst of Sinners. And wheresoever we find that at any time we come short of that Long-suffering which hath been described, let us thence conclude, that as much as we want in Long-suffering, so much we want in Charity, and accordingly be humbled for, and bewail our deficiency in that Grace, and labour to strengthen it. As our Charity grows stronger, our Long-suffering will be greater.

And so I come to the next property
 1 Cor. 13. of Charity ; *Charity is kind.*
 4.

SERMON

SERMON III.

I COR. xiiij. 4.

— *Charity is kind ; Charity envieth not.*

IN handling of this Property, I shall only speak a little of the nature of Kindness, and then make Application. As concerning the former, the nature of Kindness cannot be set forth better than by shewing, by way of particular Instances, what the Things are in which it is discovered : and they are chiefly these that follow.

1. Kindness shews it self in a propension, or readiness to do Good to Men, or to be useful and beneficial to others. The *Greek* word *χενός*, is a good, beneficent, or useful Man. So *Rom.*

2. 4. *Despiseſt thou the riches of the Goodneſs of God ;* ἡ χενία τοῦ αὐτοῦ ; that is, of his Beneficence, or Bounty. So

likewise is the word rendred by Goodness, *Rom. II. 22.* which indeed, to speak properly, is rather the cause and fountain of Beneficence, than the thing it self. Men do Good, or are actually helpful and beneficial to others, from that *χρησιμότης*, that Principle of Kindness or Goodness that is in them. So then where Kindness is, it will make a Man ready to do Good. And therefore,

(1.) A kind Man will be easily intreated and prevailed with; there will not be need of much Importunity to make him willing to do good Offices.

(2.) He will sometimes seek Opportunities of doing Good to others, and gladly imbrace them when he meets with them.

(3.) He will be troubled if he cannot do those good Offices which he is desired to do; and therefore he will express his willingness where ability is wanting; and he will not deny a Man that desires a Courtesie of him, without Christian Civility, and manifestation of Love and Good-will. There is indeed much more Kindness shewed in a civil Denial, and the Trouble we express that we cannot do a Neighbour or a Friend the good Turns which we would,

would, than in a soure and forced Condescension to his Desires. The truth is, whatever a Man doth for another, he can hardly be said to be kind therein, unless he do it willingly and chearfully.

2. Kindness shews it self in a readiness to pass by and forgive Offences. Thus God expresseth his Kindness to us : *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and of great kindness.* Joel 2. 13. Wherefore David, begging the Pardon of his Sins, prays that God would have Mercy upon him according to his Loving-kindness ; and according to the multitude of his tender Mercies blot out his Transgressions. And thus would God have us to manifest our Kindness to one another : *Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another.* Eph. 4. 32.

3. Kindness is discovered in taking small Things in good part, and making fair and candid, kind and friendly Constructions of what is well meant. This is a part of the Kindness which Parents have for their Children ; those Things how inconsiderable soever, are kindly interpreted and well taken from them, that would not have that favourable

acceptance from a Stranger, or a Person more remote.

4. Kindness appears in a willingness to make use of and be beholden to others, and in a ready and thankful acceptance of Kindnesses from them as there is occasion. Kindness is mutual, and may be expressed as well in receiving as in giving.

5. Kindness is expressed in a general sweetness and acceptableness of our Carriage towards others. But here care must be taken that we mistake not somewhat else for Kindness, I mean Christian Kindness that is a fruit of Love. There are divers Things that are like this Kindness, and may easily be taken for it, but are widely different from it. As,

1. Sinful compliance with Men, humouring them in their evil ways. There are some whose study it is to comply with all sorts of Persons and Companies; and they take it for a great Virtue to be able to accommodate and apply themselves to every Man's Humour. But he that thus studies to please and comply with Men, shall never be able to please God. If a Man will keep a good Conscience and be accepted with
God,

The Third Sermon.

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God, he must often harden himself to incur Men's displeasure. We must be kind to Men's Persons, but not to their Vices. Our Rule is, *Let every one please his Neighbour for his good to Edification.* Rom. 13. 2.

To comply with him and let him alone in his Sin, is to please him for his hurt and to his Destruction. You may call this Kindness if you will; but 'tis a cruel and pernicious Kindness, and he that uses it acts the part of an Enemy rather than a Friend. In such Cases he is most kind to you, who is kind to your Soul, who dares offend you and incur your displeasure for your Spiritual good; who if need be will deal roundly and faithfully with you to make you sensible of your Sin, and recall you from the error of your Ways. This was David's judgment in this matter. *Let the Righteous smite me and it shall be a Kindness.* Ps. 141. 5.

2. Flattery is another thing which with some may go for Kindness, but is as contrary unto true Kindness as any thing can be. Some innure their Tongues to such a way of smooth and pleasing Language, that they can do no other but commend you, and speak all good of you to your Face, though perchance
behind

behind your Back they will be as forward to find fault with you, and censure you, as any else. This Treacherous practice is a great injury to those who are weak, and befools them into a vain conceit of their own worth, than which nothing is more dangerous. And as for others who are able to put a difference between true Kindness and Flattery, 'tis most odious and distasteful to these, to hear you bestowing those liberal commendations on them, which they know you neither do nor can really believe to be due to them.

3. Another thing that may be easily mistaken for true Kindness, is, when a Man shall be so facil and easie, as to be perswaded to offer violence to his own Conscience that he may gratifie his Friend or his Neighbour. Many would be apt to think it a part of Kindness for a Man to take a false Oath, or tell a Lye to do his Friend a Courtesie ; and on the other side, they may be as apt to censure such a Man for one that hath neither Kindness nor Charity, that will not be ready to give a false Testimony in Favour of a Friend or a Poor Man. But these Men understand not what true Kindness means. As Charity, so
true

true Kindness begins at Home : A Man must first be kind to his own Soul ; and then kind to his Neighbour. 'Tis a most preposterous and wicked kindness, for any Man to wound his own Conscience, and hazard the Destruction of his Soul that he may do his Neighbour a good turn. This is a kindness that no Man ought to expect from his Brother, nor must he take it ill if he be denied it. No Laws of Friendship or Neighbourhood oblige any Man to serve his Friend or Neighbour further then will consist with a good Conscience.

And thus I have shewed wherein kindness consists, and what are the just boundaries and limits of it. Now to apply what hath been spoken touching this property of Charity.

Use 1. We may hence be informed, that Kindness and Civility are very consonant and agreeable to the principles of our Religion. The Christian Religion obligeth no Man to put off Humanity, and to become rude and uncivil. Too many who make profession of Religion, may so carry themselves as if Religion and Civility were inconsistent. But they herein forget their Duty, and
bring

bring dishonour upon their profession. Kindness and the Civilities of converse are not only allowed a Christian, but expressly enjoined him. *Be kindly affectioned one to another, saith St. Paul, Rom. 12, 10. Put on as the elect of God, Holy and Beloved, Bowels of Mercies, Kindness.* And to the same purpose the Apostle St. Peter, *Love as Brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, Add to Patience Godliness, and to Godliness Brotherly Kindness.* And there is scarce any thing that Beautifies and Adorns Religion more, then our kind and civil deportment towards those with whom we converse. This makes Religion amiable and Lovely, even in the Eyes of those who are strangers to it; provided always that our Kindness be such as it ought to be, that it Degenerate not into sinful compliance, or base Flattery; and that it ingage us not to prostitute and violate our Consciences, that we may gratifie those whom we would be kind to. Let Kindness and good Conscience go hand in hand; in all Places and Companies let the Fear of God be mingled with our Kindness; let us be so kind to all with whom we have to do, as to keep up an Holy awe of God in

our

our Hearts, a perfect Hatred of, and Zealous opposition against whatsoever is Evil in what Person soever; and then let us be as kind as we can. Such a mixture of Kindness with the Free and Vigorous exercise of other Graces as occasion requires, oh how Lovely is it! But yet also how difficult is this mixture! How apt are we to slide out of Kindness into base and unworthy compliance! How often doth our Kindness, such as it is, either extinguish, or cool all our Zeal for God, and make us forget the regard we ought to have of his Honour, and of the Welfare of our own Souls, and the Souls of our Brethren! O let's not suffer so excellent an accomplishment to be Adulterated and Embased by such drossy Allays; much less to be transformed into what is purely of another Nature, having nothing of right Kindness in it but the Name. Let's not suffer our hateful and loathsome Vices to put on the Vizard of Kindness, and to act their parts in the Attire of that Gracious Endowment. And to the end it may not so be, I shall recommend to you two or three things more besides what hath been already spoken.

I. Let

1. Let your Kindness be sincere, and from the Heart. The Apostle saith, *Let Love be without Dissimulation*, so let your Kindness be without Dissimulation. There may be here a two-fold Dissimulation; You may dissemble either when you make shew of Kindness to them for whom you have none, or when you make shew of more Kindness than you have for them.

Rom. 12.
9.

(1.) Make not shew of Kindness towards them for whom you have none. 'Tis true, your Kindness should be as large and diffusive as your Love; and therefore as you should have Love for all Men, at least a Love of Benevolence or Good-Will, whereby you wish and desire their good; so you should proportionably have a kindness for all Men, though with such difference as the different Condition and Quality of the Persons requires. But if there be some, (suppose your Enemies or the like) for whom you have no Kindness, your Heart being full of malignant Rancour and implacable Malice against them, then while 'tis thus with you, never make shew of that Kindness towards them which in your Heart you bear them not; this were to add deep Dissimula-

tion

tion and Hypocrisie to your Malice. But however, take heed that you rest not in so dangerous a condition. How can you expect or hope to be forgiven of God as long as you are so far from forgiving your Brother, that you cherish in your Heart implacable Hatred against him? Wherefore never be quiet until you have gotten that Charitable frame of Heart towards him, as you may shew Kindness to him sincerely and without Dissimulation. In the meantime, bewail the wretched Distemper of your Heart, but make not a shew of what you have not. But alas, how common a thing is this in the World, for Men to make shew of much Kindness towards those outwardly, against whom the rankest Malice and Revenge secretly ferments and boyls up in their Hearts, for Men whose Hearts are full of Rancour and Malice to carry themselves with much appearance of Amity and Friendliness outward, the words of whose Mouth are smoother then Butter, but War is in their Heart, and softer than Oyl, and yet are they drawn Swords, as David expresseth it Psal. 55. 21. Abhor you all such Cursed and Treacherous Simulation of Kindness, and let your Tongue

Tongue and all your outward deportment speak the inward frame of your Heart.

(2.) Take heed that you make shew of no more Kindness then you have. Though you have in your Heart some degree of real Kindness for a Man, yet affect not that Language or Carriage, whereby you would make it appear to be greater than 'tis. So far as you allow yourself to do this, you do but juggle with your Friend or Brother, and put a cheat upon him. Why should you endeavour to delude him, and make him believe you have more Kindness for him than you have? If you made shew of Kindness towards him when you have none at all for him, then you would grant this were a vile, base and unworthy carriage towards him; and why not also, though in somewhat a lower degree, when you would make him apprehend you have much more Kindness for him then in truth you have? If he tell you a Lye who speaks that which hath nothing of Truth in it, what doth he do that mingles Truth with Falshood, and makes you believe more then is true? But I may speak long enough concerning this Argument before I shall be able

to prevail with many to leave their evil custom. This Airy vein of Complimental Profession of Kindness in such Hyperbolical expressions, as exceed all the bounds of Truth and Sobriety of Speech, hath now gained that Reputation and Acceptance, that he who is not well skilled in this Art, is with many hardly judged fit to converse with Persons of Quality. He that hath not in a readiness upon all occasions a pound of Complemental Kindness for one dram of true and sincere Kindness, is a dull and stupid Fellow that deserves to be hissed out of the Company of all Civil and Well-bred Persons. A strange thing it is, that Sincerity and Plain-Heartedness, which was wont to be one of the highest commendations of a Christian, should now be looked upon as matter of Reproach. Let the Gallants and Wits of the World censure you as they please. Let it be your Honour and Ambition to be like your Saviour, *in whose Mouth* 1 Pet. 2. *there was found no guile,* whose Lan- 22. guage and whole converse with Men was in all Plainness and Sincerity, and who never taught us these Finer Arts of Converse, either by his Doctrine or Example.

2. Shew Kindness in Simplicity. Understand this in the same Sense, in which you do that of the Apostle, *Rom. 12. 8.* *He that giveth, let him do it in Simplicity*, that is, let him do it in singleness of Heart, let him have no sinister Aims, or low and unworthy Designs in giving. So let him that sheweth Kindness do it in Simplicity, let him neither act from undue Motives, nor propound to himself any undue Ends therein; such as are the insinuating of your self into Favour and Acceptance with Persons, that you may have the better advantage to serve your self of them, and bring about your own designs to their prejudice; the undermining and supplanting of them the more easily and effectually when once you have gotten within them; or at best the commending of your self to the Eyes of Men, and the satisfying of your affectation of Popular Applause, and the Reputation of one who can so carry himself as to render himself acceptable unto all Men. These and other such like Ends and Designs are either Wicked and Diabolical, or if not so, yet very low and unworthy of a Christian, or of any Man that would profess to live

live as one that Steers his Course by the Conduct of Ingenuous and truly Generous Principles. Let your Kindness issue from an higher Fountain, act from higher Motives, and be directed to higher and more Noble Ends.

(1.) Let your Kindness be a fruit of Charity, the proper and genuine issue of that sincere and cordial Love which you bear the objects of your Kindness.

(2.) Let your Kindness be such as hath an Eye at the Command of God; be Kind in Obedience to God, and because he hath said, *be ye kindly affectioned one to another.* And consequently let your end therein be, not so much to please Men as to please God, and be accepted of him.

(3.) Let your Kindness be directed to the Glory of God: Be Kind that you may thereby Adorn the Gospel, gain Credit to that Holy Religion you profess, and render it amiable in the Eyes of the beholders. Be Kind that you may thereby gain the greater Interest in the Hearts and Affections of Men for their good, and in order to the better promoting of their Salvation, be Kind that you may thereby stop the Mouths of Evil Men, who slander Religion as

a fower and uncouth, a rigid and fullen thing. Be Kind that you may thereby invite profane Men to come into Christ, deliver them from the prejudices they have taken up against a strict and Conscientious course of Life ; and that you may deprive Satan of those Arguments by which he frights Men away from true Piety, and hurries them into all manner of Lewdness and Debauchery.

3. Let your Kindness be Universal, give it scope enough to act ; Let it not be so confined to any particular Sort or Rank of Persons, as that all others be excluded from having any share in it. 'Tis true your Kindness must run in a fuller stream towards those who are truly good ; but the worst of Men and your very Enemies must partake of it also in such ways as Christian Prudence shall direct. And you may mingle some Kindness when you chide them, even where there may be cause you should frown, yet as it were through the Clouds you may let out some Rayes of your Kindness upon them the better to dissolve and melt them into a compliance with your wholesome Counsels.

4. Let

4. Let your Kindness be Uniform and like it self. Be not so inconstant and variable as to be kind to day, but fower and displeasing to morrow. Let not every small trifle, every groundless suspicion and causeless jealousy of unkindness in others, cover your Countenance with a Cloud. Let your Kindness be as the Sun, that with his Beams scatters mists, dissipates and breaks through the Clouds, which would hinder its benigne influences, and intercept its Light.

Use 2. This also may help us to judge of the Truth and Measure of our Charity. If Charity be Kind, if Kindness be the property of it, there can be little Charity where there is little Kindness. And if true and sincere Kindness discover it self in the several ways before mentioned, upon enquiry we shall find no great Measure thereof in many. Let us briefly review and run over the particulars again.

The first thing in which Kindness shews it self was in a readiness to do good Offices. Here how backward and unwilling are many ! Though they may do you a good Office and do themselves

no hurt, yet you shall not easily prevail with them ; but if there be the least inconvenience to themselves, in that by which they may do another Man the greatest Kindness, you shall hardly be able to obtain it of them : or if they should be overcome by your importunity, yet they yield to you so grudgingly and sowerly, that there is nothing of Kindness therein. But there are others who are much worse, I mean, who instead of being ready to do good as opportunities are offered, study to do all the mischief they can, and will be sure to lose no advantage thereof.

The second thing in which Kindness is discovered, is, the over-looking and forgiving of offences. And here also how many are there who breathe out nothing but Revenge against those from whom they have suffered ! who are so impatient of injuries, and so irreconcilable to those who have offended them, that whatsoever is said or done to pacify them signifieth nothing.

The third thing in which Kindness is manifested was, the taking of small things in good part, and making a Candid and Friendly interpretation of them. But how captious and apt to take offence

fence at every thing are many, how hard to be pleased, how ready to make the worst construction of what was well meant, and not only fairly capable of a better construction, but could not easily be taken amiss, unless by one who would studiously endeavour to pervert Men's good intentions, and pick matter of offence and quarrel where only malignity of Spirit and ill-will could make a shift to espy any !

The fourth particular in which Kindness is discovered, was a willingness to be beholden to others, and to accept of Kindnesses when they are offered. But many by their good-will would be beholden to no body ; they rudely and sullenly refuse and cast back Kindnesses when they are offered, and that many times where they stand in need of them, and cannot well be without them. And if at any time it so falls out that they must receive a Kindness from any, they make all the haste they can to repay it, not out of Kindness, but rather out of Unkindness, and because it troubles them to be beholden to any Man.

Lastly, As for that general sweetness and acceptableness of Carriage towards others, many are so far from this, that

the Character of churlish *Nabal* rather belongs to them, who was such a Son of *Belial* that a Man could not speak to him, whose Carriage is so cross and vexatious to those that are near them, that they of their Nighbourhood may complain that *Briars and Thornes are with them*, and that *they dwell among Scorpions*; which was the Prophet *Ezekiel's* Condition, living amongst an injurious and perverse People. These Men who have so little Kindness, cannot have much Charity; or rather concerning some of them, it may well be presumed that they have none at all.

And so I pass on to the Third Property of Charity, which is, that it *Envieth not*; ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ ζηλοῖ. The word *ζηλοῦ* is sometimes taken in a good sense; so *I Cor. 12. 31. Covet earnestly the best Gifts*; *ζηλοῦτε*; where it signifies an earnest and laudable desire and striving after. But here 'tis taken in the worst sense, and signifies to envy. So the word *ζηλοῦ* is sometimes taken for holy Zeal, and other-while either for sinful and vicious Emulation, or for Envy. In handling of this Property of Charity, I shall first describe Envy, and shew

shew what it is ; and then compare it with Love, and shew how contrary it is thereunto ; and lastly apply all.

Concerning the First Thing, Envy is a sinful or vicious Distemper of the Soul, whereby any Man is aggrieved or troubled at the Good of another Man. But we shall better understand the nature of it by its Causes and Effects, than by the bare Description of it. As for the Causes of Envy, they are these.

1. Pride. The proud Man either conceiveth he surpasseth others in some good thing or other, or that he deserves to surpass them ; or he ambitiously affects and desires to do it ; and hence 'tis that if another Man seems to equal him, or come up near to him, and much more if he be judged to excel him, he is aggrieved and troubled at it.

2. Inordinate Self-love is another Cause of Envy. A Man loves himself sinfully, and from that vicious and corrupt Self-love, desires to be above and before others, and to inhance and appropriate to himself the good Things which he affects, and therefore he is troubled and afflicted that another should have

have the same Things, and in the same measure with himself.

3. Want of Love to the Person envied, or rather some degree of Hatred and Malignity against him, is another Cause of Envy. If we do not in some degree malign and hate him whom we envy, to be sure we bear him little hearty Good-will; if we did bear him much and hearty Good-will, it could not well be that the Good which he is possessed of, or which betides him, should be an eye-sore to us. So much of the Causes of Envy. The Effects of Envy are principally these that follow.

1. An inward fretting, disquieting and afflicting a Man's self at the good Things of others. This Self-vexation is many times so great, that it causeth Men even to consume and pine away; they being not able to enjoy themselves, nor any thing they have, only because Things go better with their Neighbour than they would have them. Upon this account it is that Solomon saith,

PROV. 14. *Envy is the rottenness of the Bones.*

30.

2. Another Effect of Envy is an unwillingness to own and acknowledge the good Things of others. The envious Man cannot endure to hear you
speak

ſpeak good of the Perſon whom he envieth. 'Tis moſt irkſome and diſpleaſing to him to be within hearing when another Man commends him, eſpecially if he ſhall attribute thoſe good Things to him which he himſelf hath not.

3. A readineſs to detract from and leſſen the good Things of the Party envied, if not directly, openly, and in plain terms, yet indirectly, ſlily, and cloſely, ſo as it may eaſily be perceived, that though he will not for ſhame ſpeak out his mind, yet he hath an aching Tooth at him, and is ſecretly vexed that he cannot degrade him, and lay him lower, but by diſcovering that Envy and Malignity againſt him, which for his own Credits ſake he would conceal.

4. A ſecret deſiring and wiſhing the loſs, or diminution, and abatement of thoſe good Things for which he envies him. This is an inſeparable concomitant or attendant of Envy. He that is afflicted and aggrieved at the good Things of his Neighbour, cannot but ſecretly wiſh they were not, or that they were leſs than they are.

5. A rejoycing at any hurt befalling the Perſon envied, eſpecially in that
good

good Thing for which he envieth him. He that envieth his Neighbour because he is richer than himself, would be glad if any Loss should befall him in his Estate : He who envieth his Neighbour in respect of his good Name and Reputation, would secretly please himself, and take content in it, if something should befall him or his, whereby his Reputation might be blasted, and his good Name impaired.

6. Envy when it grows rank, and comes to be at its height, endeavours the undermining and subverting of the Party envied. This was the Effect of the Envy of Jacob's Sons against their Brother Joseph : *The Patriarchs moved with Envy, sold Joseph into Egypt.* Envy if deeply rooted in the Heart, and grown strong, is a most destructive thing. *Wrath is cruel, and Anger is outrageous ; but who is able to stand before Envy ?* In which words Solomon gives us to understand, that no Passion is so dangerous, or threatens us so much Mischief as Envy.

And thus we have seen what the nature of Envy is. It now follows in the next place, that I shew how contrary Envy is in all these Particulars now men-

mentioned, to the nature of Love ; which is so manifest as that I need not be long in the confirmation of it. For,

1. He who truly loves another, is well-pleased, cheered and comforted, when any good Thing befalls him, and takes as much Content therein, as if the Benefit accruing to another had accrued to himself. He can heartily rejoice in the Welfare and Prosperity of his Neighbour ; he can look upon it with Content, and cordially bless God for it ; so far is he from disquieting and afflicting himself because of it.

2. Love gladly acknowledgeth any good Thing in others ; and espies out those good Things in the Object beloved, which others overlook and take no knowledge of. This is evident in the Love of Parents to their Children. How quick-sighted are they to observe, and ready to own what is good in them !

3. Love is no detractor from the good Things in others, but makes the most of them, and endeavours rather to add to them and heighten them, than to diminish them, take away from them, or make them appear less than they are.

4. Love

Nam. 11.
29.

4. Love is so far from wishing the loss, or diminution and impairing of the good Things of others, that it unfeignedly wisheth and desires the increase of them. When *Joshua's* Spirit was too much leavened with Envy against *Eldad* and *Medad*, because they prophesied in the Camp, *Moses* whose Heart was full of Love to God's People, and fervent Zeal for their Welfare, rebukes him, saying, *Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's People were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.*

5. Love is so far from rejoicing at any Evil that hath befallen others, that it is troubled at it ; mourning with those that mourn, and being in some measure afflicted with those that are afflicted.

6. Love is so far from endeavouring to subvert or undermine others, that it labours to succour and uphold them ; and to promote and further whatsoever may be for their Comfort or Benefit. So we have seen how contrary the nature of Envy is to that of Charity. And now I should in the next place make some Application of what hath been said ; but I shall first Answer a Question

Question or two that may here be moved.

Quest. 1. Is there not a kind of Emulation of the good Things of others, allowable and commendable? And if such an Emulation be commendable, how doth it differ from Envy? It may seem to come near to it, and to have something of the nature of Envy.

Ans. There is a vertuous and laudable, a pious and holy Emulation of the good Things of others. Of this holy Emulation the Apostle speaks *Rom. 11. 13, 14.* saying, *In as much as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnifie mine Office, if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.* If this had not been a good and commendable Emulation, the Apostle would not have endeavoured to provoke his Country-men the *Jews* thereunto. Of the like pious Emulation the same Apostle speaks in the *2 Cor. 9. 2.* where commending them for their readines of Mind in ministring to the Saints, he saith, *I know the forwardness of your Mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, and your Zeal hath provoked very many; that is, it had kindled*
in

in their Hearts an holy Emulation of them therein, and a zealous Endeavour to imitate them.

Now though some may be apt to conceive that this Emulation should have something of the nature of Envy, yet if we consider it, and look into the nature of it, we shall easily discern that there is a wide difference between holy Emulation and Envy.

1. This Emulation is only of Things, the desire whereof is Morally good and laudable ; as Gifts, Graces, serviceableness unto God, and the like. But Envy is of a larger extent. A Man may envy another for those Things which are neither good nor desirable in themselves, but only apprehended and fancied to be such.

2. Whereas Emulation comprehends or implies three Things ; an high esteem of that Good in others, for or in respect of which we emulate them ; some Grief or Trouble that we come short of them, I mean, if it be through our own default ; and thereupon an earnest desire and contending to follow them, and come up to them : In all these there is nothing of Envy or Malignity.

(1.) There

(1.) There is no Grief or Trouble that others have such good Things; but a Trouble upon our own account, that we through our Sin, through our Sluggishness or Slackness, have not attained what they have: that we through our Laziness and Carelessness should be so much behind them.

(2.) Neither are there any of those Effects of Envy before-mentioned: No vexatious disquieting or afflicting our selves because others have what we have not; no wishing that they had less than they have; no Endeavours to blast them, or lessen what they have; and so for the rest. In a word, though a Man emulates them, and contends with all earnestness to follow them, overtake them, yea, and to out-run them, and excel them if he can, yet he doth not malign them because they run so fast, much less doth he desire or endeavour to stop them in their course. He so emulates them as that he can in the mean time rejoyce in their behalf, and bless God unfeignedly and affectionately, that they are possessed of that Good which he himself hath not yet attained unto. This is the nature of pure holy Emulation in those who

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can attain unto it : But yet I think 'tis somewhat rarely to be found without some mixture of Envy, more or less, as there is no Grace to be found so perfect in the Regenerate here, but that there is still together with it some remainder of the opposite Corruption. But this Corruption adhering to it is no more any part of the nature of holy Emulation, than Unbelief is of the nature of Faith, though Faith be never without some degree of Unbelief sticking to it, and as it were mingled with it.

Quest. 2. Who are they who are the Objects of Mens Envy, and what are the Persons which it strikes at ? Are they only such as are above them, or as some way or other excel them ?

Ans. Mens Envy is principally directed against those who are in some respect above them, or before them. But yet these are not the only Objects of Envy.

A Man may envy his Equals, that they have arrived at being his Equals; he may envy his Inferiours, and those who are behind him, that they make so much haste after him, and come up so near unto him, though they have not
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over-taken him. A rich Man may envy his Neighbour whose Estate is much short of his own, that he thrives in the World so well as he doth, and that he improves his Estate so fast. A Man that is Master of such a Trade or Mystery, and is exactly skilled in it, may envy another, who is far short of his Skill and Experience, because his Improvement of himself is so visible, and he is dayly making such a progress as promiseth he may in time not only equal, but excel those who are at present much before him. One poor Man may envy another who is poorer than himself, that he meets with any Succour or Relief, though he hath more Helps, and better Supplies himself. So then he who would discover all the malignant workings of this bitter root of Envy in himself, must consider and examine how he stands affected, not only towards his Superiours and Equals, but even towards his Inferiours.

Now to make Application.

Use 1. What hath been said concerning this property of Charity, may also inform us how weak and defective

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our Charity is, if we have any at all, which may very well be questioned of some of us. Where Envy abounds there cannot be much Charity : These two cannot thrive in the same Heart. Wherefore there needs no other Argument to prove that there is but little true Love in the World, then this, that there is so much Envy. We can look no where but this odious and detestable Vice faceth us, and is full in our Eye. If we look upward, and take a view of those who are in high Places, what Envy and Maligning one another is there amongst those who overlook the rest of the World ? That this Man hath a greater Place than another, that another hath more Honour and Esteem, that another hath more Interest in the Favour of Great Men, how doth it vex and disquiet those who might seem to have already attained so much of the Riches, Preferments and Honours of the World, as to be even satiated and glutted with them ! And yet as if they themselves had nothing, how doth it afflict them that any other hath but a little more ! Hereupon what detracting and backbiting, what aspersing and defaming one another ! What endeavours to under-
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dermine and supplant one another! And what secret complacency and hugging of themselves is there, shall I say? Yea rather, what open Triumph and Rejoycing is there when a Great and Eminent Person gets a fall, when any thing comes upon him that blemisheth his Reputation, and stains his Honour, when he is frowned upon and cast out of Favour by those that are above him; when he is laid aside, or degraded, and enforced to come down to a lower Form! If it be the property of Charity, that it Envyeth not, What's become of Charity, where Envy is so Rank and Venemous? Again, if we look upon those who are of the middle Rank, doth not the same Vice as much Reign among these! Are not City and Country full of it? In the Country, that one Man hath a better Crop of Corn than his Neighbour, that his Cattle thrive better, that he gets a better Bargain, that the Blessing of God is upon the work of his Hands, while another seems to labour in the Fire, and to reap no other fruit of his Pains than weariness and disappointment; How do these things cause our Neighbour to have an Evil Eye at another, and to make another

Man's Mercies to be his own Crosses and Miseries ! So in Cities and Towns, what Malignity of Spirit is there, what grudging and repining against any Man that a little surpasseth his Neighbour ! If he hath more Custom, and better Trading, if he hath gotten into a more advantagious way of Imployment, and his Gains come in faster ; if he goes forward in his Estate while another stands at a stay or goes backward ; how irksome and grievous is this to his Envyous Neighbour ! And how little doth he enjoy himself that he is so near one who manageth his Trade with such success ! But if any Man should through his skill, industry, and the Blessing of God upon his endeavours get above all his Neighbours, and come to be the Wealthiest Man in a Town, this were enough to load him with the ill-will of all his Neighbours, and to make him the object, and Butt of the Envy of the whole Town : every Man almost would have a pike at him, and scarce any action of his should pass without some sinister construction. This is for the most part the course of this World, by which we may easily judge how little Charity there is among Men. Lastly, As for those who are of the lowest Rank, the very poorest, the meanest,

meanest, how little soever they have to sustain themselves and theirs, they have Envy enough at one another, there is no want here. To say nothing of the Envious repining of too many Poor People against the Rich, or any whom God hath more plentifully supplied and furnished with the things of this Life, there is hardly any thing that one Poor Man hath above another, but shall make him the object of the Envy of some other, except more Work and Employment than others; this is that which many of the Poor care not so much for, as to Envy others upon that account; for they would not have Employment if they might; they had rather Eat the Bread of Idleness, and get their Livelyhood by going from Door to Door, than by the labour of their Hands in any Honest way of Employment. But I say there is Envy enough against one another even amongst these. He that obtains but a better Almes, that finds more Favour, and meets with better helps, that hath but a good Look, or a good Word from the Richer sort, shall even for that be Envyed: and in probability divers of the better deserving Poor would sometimes be better re-

lieved then they are, were it not for the Envious Eyes of those that are about them, who think much of any thing that is done for any others but themselves : Thus we see how epidemical this evil Disease is, and how its pestilent contagion spreads it self Universally, infecting high and low, Rich and Poor, there being no Soil so Barren, but that this poysonous Weed grows in it. If you think the charge over severe, and too Uncharitable, whereby this evil is made so common, and the infection thereof so Universally spreading, then stand forth whoever you be, and acquit your self from this imputation if you can. I dare appeal to the Consciences of the best, the Holiest, the most Unblameable, the most Charitable, whether they be not tainted with this Corruption, and feel not within themselves the workings thereof sometimes, more or less. If they know their own Hearts, I am well assured they will readily acknowledge and bewail their proneness to this hateful Sin, and Judge and Condemn themselves much more for it than I have done. If there should be any here who would be ready to justify themselves, let me ask them

a few questions to convince them of their error, and of their foul ignorance of the corruption of their Hearts. Was the prosperity of no Man ever an Eye-fore to you? Were you never troubled at it? Did your Heart never rise at it? Did you never repine at the Credit and Reputation of any other? Was it never an offence of Heart to you that any other was well spoken of, commended, made use of, equalled to you, preferred before you in those things in which you think you do excel, or would be thought to excel others? Did you never observe those praise-worthy and commendable things in others, which you were unwilling see, and could not take notice of without some degree of secret regret? Did you never take any content in the Calamities, Infirmities, Slips or Miscarriages of any other Man? Were you never well-pleased with another Man's Loss, or glad at an Ill-Turn? Did you never with delight receive an Evil Report, and take pleasure in spreading and communicating it to others? Or if you can Universally acquit your self from all these, in reference to all Times, Places, and Persons, yet can you say that you constantly Mourn with those

those that Mourn, and Rejoyce with those that Rejoyce? Can you always, in all Cases, and in reference to all Persons, take Pleasure in and bless God for whatsoever good is observed in any Man, for whatsoever good betides any? And are you troubled at his troubles, and afflicted at his afflictions, as if they were your own? If you can truly say it hath constantly been thus with you, then will I grant that you are a Person untainted with Envy, and that Charity which Envyeth not, hath the full Possession and Sovereign Command of your Heart; then will I acknowledge that you are One of Ten Thousand, yea the only Person on this side Heaven that hath been enriched with such attainments. But alas! This is a condition of that Perfection which this Life is incapable of: this is that which we must be contending for and pressing hard after as long as we are here, but shall never fully attain, until we come to Heaven. And therefore whosoever he be that thinks he hath so much Charity as hath already purged out all Envy, is one who knows very little of himself, and hath but small Acquaintance with
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the Estate of his Soul. And so much of the first Use.

Use 2. Be humbled for your Envy; That this vile Corruption should be so strong in you, and your Charity so weak as the strength of this Corruption discovers it to be. How should you loath and even abhor your self to consider, that there should be so little Love in you, or rather so much Ill-will, and Malignity in your Heart against your Brother, as to be troubled and afflicted at his Happiness, or take pleasure in his Crosses and Adversities, as the Envious Person doth! That your Eye should be Evil because God is good, as the unreasonableness of this Corruption is set forth, *Matth. 20. 15.* That the very Favour, Bounty and Beneficence of God to another should make you sick! That you cannot be contented that God should do with his own as he pleaseth, and dispose of his Favours as he sees good; a thing which every Man thinks he hath a Right to do; and that none can deprive or abridge him of that Power and Liberty without manifest Injury! All this Evil there is in this Vice, and therefore let no Man look upon

upon Envy as a small Sin for which he need not be much troubled. Let him think he cannot be enough humbled for that Sin which hath so much Venom and Malignity in it.

Use 3. Labour to subdue Envy. Be far from allowing or cherrishing so pestilent a Corruption in your Heart; never be at rest till you have broken the Neck of it, or in some good Measure Mortified it. And that you may the more earnestly endeavour the subduing of it, consider the mischiefs attending it.

(1.) If you give it Entertainment, and cherish it, till it grow Strong, and get the Command of your Soul, it may put you upon and ingage you in the vilest, the most enormous, the most horrid designs and practices. An example hereof we have in *Joseph's* Brethren. It had been a most wicked thing to have dealt so with a meer Stranger as they dealt with their Brother: but considering their near Relation to *Joseph*, and the Brotherly Affection, Kindness, and Tendernefs which that Relation required, it was a most Unnatural and Barbarous thing, first to devise to take a-way

way his Life, and being diverted from that Wickedness, then to sell him for a Slave to People of a Foreign Nation. And yet this so great a Sin did Envy draw them into.

(2.) The Envious Man while he Malignes another Man, punisheth himself, there being no greater Torment almost than that inward regret, and self-vexation which Envy causeth. The Righteous God hath so ordered the matter, that this Sin should be its own punishment, the Envious Person becoming his own Executioner and Tormentor.

(3.) While a Man Envies another Man the enjoyment of those good things which he hath, he forfeits into God's Hand his own Mercies : For what can be more Just, than that God should deprive you of those good things which you cannot endure that any other Man should be partaker of together with your self? And then as for others, by Envyng them you give unto God an occasion of adding to their good things, and of heaping his Mercies upon them so much the more plentifully because you repine at his Bounty.

Now

Now if you would get the mastery of this Sin, and keep it under, you must,

1. Labour to strengthen Charity, and grow in Love. *Charity envieth not* ; the more Charity you have, the less Envy have you. And if we could in this Life arrive at the Perfection of Charity, we should be perfectly freed from Envy :
 1 Joh. 4. 18. For as St. *John* saith, that *perfect Love casteth out Fear* ; so may it be said also, that perfect Love casteth out Envy.

2. Keep your Heart with all diligence. Watch your Heart, and narrowly observe all the first stirrings of Envy, and stifle them in the birth. Set your self against them, and that not coldly and slothfully, but earnestly, vigorously, and effectually, as soon as ever you discover them. Suffer not one envious Motion of your Heart to pass without a severe check. Resist such Motions strongly, reason them down, pray them down, and never leave till you reduce your Heart to a charitable frame.

3. When you observe that you begin to envy any Man the good Things in any kind which God hath bestowed upon him, let it be your constant practice to set your self to bless God for his Bounty

Bounty and Goodness towards such a Person, and earnestly beg of him that he would be pleased to increase what he hath bestowed upon him. Now as Envy in some cases is attended with special Aggravations, so ought we in those cases so much the more to condemn our selves for it, and resist it. As,

(1.) When we envy Men for those Things which are really their Unhappiness, and threaten their Ruine ; such as are, high Places unto which Mens vicious courses have advanced them, Riches ill gotten, and Wealth attained by fraudulent and unjust Practices, Success in wicked and ungodly Enterprizes, outward Prosperity in a course of Sin, Lewdness and Debauchery. Here your envying Men is most absurd and irrational ; for as 'tis with them, they are fitter Objects for your Pity than your Envy.

(2.) Another Aggravation of our Envy is, when we envy Men those good Things which they have far better deserved than our selves. When 'tis manifest (as sometimes it is) that the good Things for which we envy them, were bestowed on them by the bountiful
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Hand of God, as Rewards of that Obedience, and those Services, which we never performed, how unjust, as well as spiteful, is our Envy against them!

(3.) When we envy Men for having but a little of that with which we abound; when we are troubled that a few drops of that Bounty should light on them, which rains down upon us in plentiful showers.

(4.) When we envy Men those Gifts and Graces, those Abilities and Opportunities, whereby they are or may be serviceable to God and his People. Here besides our Malignity against the Person whom we envy, we shew how little regard we have either of God's Honour, or of the Welfare and Salvation of the Souls of Men. I say, in these and any other such like cases, where our Envy is thus aggravated, we should hate it so much the more, and endeavour the subduing and the mortification thereof with so much the more Earnestness, Diligence and Constancy.

And though upon our Endeavours, and the opposition we have made against it, we should find that we are for the present rid of it, and that we discern not the workings of it within us,
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as heretofore we did, yet let us not presently be secure, and make account that we shall hear of it no more. Tho' we may think 'tis dead, and no longer to be feared, yet let us not deceive our selves : 'tis still secretly lurking and skulking within us we may be sure, and we shall feel 'tis still alive and strong enough, when Temptations to it are again presented. Wherefore it concerns us to be ever watchful against it ; and in a continual readiness to make resistance, whensoever it shall stand up to renew its Assaults.

SERMON IV.

1 COR. xiiij. 4, 5.

—*Charity vaunteth not it self, is not
puffed up,
Doth not behave it self unseemly,*—

I Come now to the Fourth Property of Charity ; *Charity vaunteth not it self* ; ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ περιπαύεται : A word not used in ancient Greek Authors, and so there is some doubt both concerning the origination and signification of it. Some conceive it to be derived from the Latin word *perperam*, and so περιπαύεται should signifie *perperam agere*, to do things amiss or absurdly. But this signification seems to be too large for this place. The Syriack Version renders it by a word that signifies to raise Tumults, or to cause Disturbance ; and after that Version we should express it, *Charity doth not tumultuate*. But *Hesychius* makes περιπαύεται to be the same
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with *κατενίστασθαι*, *to be lifted up*, in which sense, or in a sense very near thereunto, some of the Greek Fathers have used the word. Much in this sense our Translators taking it, have rendred it, *Charity vaunteth not it self*. In this sense most of the best Interpreters understand it here. It imports therefore an arrogant and vaunting Behaviour, whereby a Man makes a vain-glorious Ostentation of what he is, of what he hath, or of what he hath done to the utmost, adorning and setting forth himself with all Advantages. Here all the difficulty is in shewing how this signification of the word suits this place, and the Apostle's present intention: for the word, as here used by the Apostle, must signifie something that is contrary to Love. But if we consider the matter, we shall find that there are divers things in this vaunting Carriage most contrary to the nature of Charity. And this both in respect of what it implies in the Person vaunting himself, and in respect of the effects that it hath upon others, unto or before whom he vaunteth himself. In respect of him who vaunteth himself, it implies,

I. Abun-

1. Abundance of Pride and Self-love. These are the root of vaunting. A Man is too much pleased with himself, and with his own things, and through his Pride and Self-love sets too high a rate upon himself, and upon what he hath : and having entertained so good an Opinion of himself, he much affects that others should be of his mind, and think as well of him as he doth of himself. Hereupon he greedily catcheth at all occasions of displaying his supposed Excellencies, and representing them in the best dress that he can put upon them. And 'tis well if in setting forth himself, he doth not over-do, and make shew of a great deal more than is agreeable to Truth ; for that's the disposition of such arrogant and vain-glorious Vaunters, usually they are not satisfied that you know all that for which they are to be commended and admired, unless they also make you apprehend it to be a great deal more than 'tis. A vaunter of himself, when he dwells upon the acceptable and delightful subject of his own Praises, is often transported beyond Truth as well as Modesty, and almost as seldom keeps within the bounds of the one as of the other.

2. Another thing which vaunting too often carries along with it (if not always) is an undervaluing and despising of others. Self-admiration and contempt of others, are two things that cannot easily be separated. Let any Man have an high esteem of himself, and an affectation of the same esteem with others, and it cannot easily be but that he should as much undervalue others, as he doth overvalue himself.

3. Another usual concomitant of vaunting is Insultation. He that vaunteth himself, indeavours to lift up and advance himself above others, and having as he thinks gotten above them, insults and vapours over them. Vaunting of your self, what is it, but in effect a clapping your wings and crowing over your Inferiours, or such as you would have to be so?

Now all these are directly opposite to the nature of Charity. For Love is an humble condescending Grace that willingly stoops to its Inferiours, and equals her self with them, yea, prefers them before her self. Love is not apt to undervalue others, but gladly sees and acknowledgeth what they are or have, and gives them their due, ever making

making good measure, and allowing all Men rather more than less than what in strictness belongs unto them. If Charity at any time err, her proper error is in Rating Men above what in truth they are, rather than under : So far is she from contemning any or insulting over them.

2. Vaunting is contrary to Charity in respect of the effects that it hath upon others, unto or before whom a Man vaunteth himself. I mean, if they be destitute of those things of which a Man vaunteth : Those effects are Shame and Grief.

1. Shame. For while a Man vaunteth himself in respect of those good things which another hath not, he seemeth to upbraid him with his wants ; which no Man can well be apprehensive of without some confusion of Face.

2. Grief. For these two, Shame and Grief go together. 'Tis Natural that a Man should be grieved for that which makes him ashamed. But here also Charity is of a contrary Nature. Love would be very tender of saying or doing any thing that might make impressions of Shame or Grief upon another,

unless in order to his greater advantage some other way. Thus I have shewed how contrary a vain-glorious Humour of vaunting is to the Nature of Love ; which will further appear by instancing in some particulars ; I shall give two or three Instances.

And the First Instance shall be in Men's discovery of their Knowledge to others in way of Discourse and Conference before Company. When they meet with a Person little vers'd in those things which they themselves have some acquaintance with, how copious and sometimes almost endless are they in Discourfing of those things which others understand not, and concerning which they have nothing to say ! And this although they cannot but know that their Ostentation of their Knowledge is troublesome and unacceptable to those with whom they converse. So again, if they can in Discourse catch at any mistake of another Man, how do they make their advantage thereof to the worsting and shaming of the party all they can. But in such Cases Love would teach a Man, in way of humble Condescention, to apply himself to Discourse of those things which others
best

best understand, unless they themselves desire it should be otherwise in reference to their better information. And if a slip or mistake in Discourse should have been, Love would make no advantage of it to the shaming of the Person concern'd, but divert to some other Discourse, or silently pass it over as seeming to take no notice of it, unless in so doing there might be any danger to the Person, himself, or some other in Company, so as Charity would oblige a Man to speak to it, and lay open the mistake.

A Second Instance shall be in the discovery of a Man's experiences in Spiritual Things; as his experiences of Temptations, or inward Troubles, or Consolations, or Answers to Prayer, or extraordinary manifestations of God's Love, or the like. Here a vaunting Temper will bring forth all, without any consideration of the seasonableness or unseasonableness thereof. Though some of the things by such as none other in the Company can be concern'd in to receive any benefit thereby: Tho' some present may be prejudiced, troubled, dejected, disquieted thereby, instead of being edified or comforted (as
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in some cases and circumstances it often falls out) yet all is one, it serves his turn to make Ostentation of what he hath found in himself, and to gain him the Reputation of a Person of more than ordinary experience in things of that Nature, and therefore out it must. But here Charity would have considered whether that which he was about to relate might be of use to any present; whether any in hearing might be Edified, Strengthened, Supported, Comforted thereby, or enabled to be helpful to any other; it would have considered and well advised it self whether some present might not take hurt by it. In a word, *Charity* that *edifieth*, as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 8. 1. would have made Edification not Ostentation, the Design and End of the discovery of such experiences; and would for ever have concealed and buried in perpetual silence, that which being discovered could serve to no other purpose than to gratifie the Pride and Vain-glorious Humour of the Relator.

A Third Instance may be in a Man's vaunting of his Friends and Relations; of what he or they have, of what he hath done, or is able to do, or the like.

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This vaunting of himself as the circumstances may be, and as their condition may be before whom he thus vaunteth, may be most contrary to Charity. It may be he thus vaunts himself before those whose Parentage and Ancestors were in a far better condition than himself or any of his Relations, though now God's Providence hath brought them low : It may be he vaunts himself before one who was himself not long since Master of greater things till God saw good to strip him of them all. It may be he vaunts of his Relations before one who hath lost his, which were to him much more dear and desirable. In such cases Charity would consider and tender the condition of others, and never vaunt it self to the grief or trouble of any other. Now for the quelling and mortifying of this vaunting Humour.

1. Consider, that if you have any good or commendable thing above others, you are indebted for it to God's free and undeserved bounty ; which one consideration should be sufficient to keep you from vaunting. *Who maketh thee to differ from another ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive ? Now if*
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1 Cor. 4.
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thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? 'Tis a very ill requital of God's bounty to make a Proud and Foolish Ostentation of what he hath freely given you. For 'tis upon the matter to deny you have received it of him, and to make your self the Author of it. Whereas all the Praise is due to God, you endeavour to take it to your self, as if you were beholden to none but your self for what you have.

2. You hereby take the readiest course to be deprived of what you thus abuse. When *Hezekiah* in a way of Vaunting and Ostentation had pleased himself in shewing all his Treasures and precious things to the Embassadors of the King of *Babylon*, 2 *Kings* 20. 13, 14. What was the next News that he heard? The Prophet *Isaiah* comes to him with a Message from the Lord in his Mouth, saying, *Behold the Days come that all that is in thine House, and that which thy Fathers have laid up in store unto this Day, shall be carried into Babylon, nothing shall be left saith the Lord. And thy Sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away, and they shall be Eunuchs in the Palace of the King*

King of Babylon, verse 17. and 18. of the same Chapter.

3. Consider that in vaunting your self, you cross your own design, and not only lose the end which you aim at, but bring the contrary upon your self. That which you in vaunting seek after, is the gaining of the Praises and Acclamations of those unto whom you vaunt your self; you would be valued and highly esteemed by them: but you could not use a more effectual expedient to render you vile and contemptible in their Eyes. Instead of admiring and highly esteeming those your excellencies, whether real or imaginary, which you vauntingly lay open and display, they contemn and depise you for your Pride, Vanity, and foolish Ostentation. Now whereas there may be sometimes just cause of speaking of your own things, the good things which God has bestowed upon you, done by you, or the like, that you may not therein offend by vaunting your self, you shall do well to observe these Rules.

1. Be not forward at any time to speak of your own things, what you or yours have, what you have done or said, how you have carried your self
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Prov. 27.
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in such a Business, upon such or such an occasion, what you have found in your self, what hath past between God and your Soul in secret ; I say be not forward to speak of your own things, remembring that of the Wise-Man, *Let another Man praise thee, and not thine own Mouth, a Stranger and not thine own Lips.* If a Man be much in Discourses of himself ; 'tis much to be suspected that he is too well pleased with himself. Humility and Modesty would induce him to believe that there are many other Subjects and Persons a great deal better deserving to be discoursed of than himself.

2. When you do speak of your own good things, be sure you have a Call to speak. And of your Call thereunto you must judge by the reason and end of your speaking, which must be either your own just vindication, or the edification, at least the benefit or advantage of the hearer some way or other. Never open your Lips to speak of your own good things, unless you be first satisfied that you propound to your self a better end therein than the magnifying and exalting your self ; that some real advantage and benefit to one or other,

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is the thing which you have in your Eye, and at which you aim at in speaking.

3. When you are satisfied that there is a just cause of speaking, and that your ends and designs are right, speak humbly, sparingly, and Modestly of the things that concern your self; and ever choose to speak less of your self and of your own good things than what might truly be spoken, rather than more. Considering every Mans proneness to exceed in speaking of things that may reflect any praise or commendation on himself, the safest way is to be sure that we speak within compass, and affect not to say all that we think might have been spoken without any prejudice to Truth. But oh how difficult is it for a Person of a proud and vaunting disposition to observe these few Rules. How doth he watch all opportunities of venting himself in the things which he thinks may advance his Reputation! How doth he study to draw those things into his discourses, and so to enlarge upon them as if he believed others to be as well pleased with that argument as he himself is! As if he thought they took as much delight in hearing him speaking of himself

self as he doth in speaking. As for just cause of speaking, 'tis cause enough to him that he meets with any one that will hear him; and as for right ends in speaking, and a probability and desire of doing good thereby, these are things that come not into all his thoughts; and Lastly, Humility, Modesty and Sobriety of Speech, are as little heeded, when his Tongue is once going on that Subject, it runs on so smoothly and glibly that it were a wonder if he should not oftner exceed the measures of Truth and Sobriety than observe them. 'Tis almost as easie for such a one to hold his Peace and say nothing at all of himself, as to keep his Tongue from those excesses into which the Pride of his Heart is ever Itching to hurry him.

And so I have done with that Fourth Property of Charity, that it *vaunteth not it self*.

I now proceed to the Fifth Property thereof; *Charity is not puffed up*; *ἡ φουφύται*; The word signifies to be swollen, or to be blown up with wind as a Bladder, Charity is not swollen, or blown up with Pride. This Property of Charity being of near affinity with
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the former, I shall not much enlarge on it. When the Apostle saith *Charity is not puffed up*, he implies that she is humble and lowly. 'Tis true Love and Humility are distinct Graces; but yet Humility is an individual attendant of Love, and as it were the Hand-maid of Love to wait on her continually, and be serviceable to her. Charity and Humility are so closely united and linked together, that wheresoever the one is there is the other, and whatsoever the one applies it self unto the other hath an hand in. Much of what might here be said, I have already had occasion to touch at. All that which I shall add is this; that Pride is therefore most inconsistent with Charity, and contrary to the Nature of it, because it greatly hinders and obstructs the principal offices of Charity: And on the other side, Humility is most agreeable and suitable to the Nature of Charity, because it furthers, helps and assists Charity in those offices which are proper to that Grace. I shall instance in two or three particulars.

1. Charity is a Fellow-like and familiar Grace. - It disposeth the Persons that are endowed with it to a Sweet,

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Amiable, Friendly, and Familiar Converse, not only with Equals but Inferiours. Now without Humility how could this be? The Proud Man overlooks his Inferiours, is strange to them, withdraws himself from them: or if he sometimes vouchsafe to converse with them, 'tis with such reservedness and distance, as whereby he plainly discovers that he hath neither Love nor Esteem for them.

2. Charity accounts nothing to be too low for her, wherein she may be any way useful or serviceable to others. She is willing to descend and bow down, to stoop and humble her self to the meanest offices in which she may be helpful to any that stand in need of her assistance. But Pride where it bares sway, is stout and stiff, will not bend or stoop; is so Nice and Coy that she disdains to foul her Fingers with mean and dirty services, how useful and necessary soever.

3. Charity is of a diffusive and communicative Nature. She most freely gives out and imparts whatsoever she hath that may be of use to any: She is no Niggard of her good things, nor doth she grudge to make others partakers

ers of them, as just occasion is offered. But Pride draws all to its self, and is still craving and taking in to cherish and maintain it self without any regard of the condition of others. If it seem to be sometimes free and bountiful, yet even then it expends and lays out upon it self rather than upon others. All its design therein is that it may thereby advance her own Revenue of Reputation and Esteem, and therewith feed and pamper her self.

Now to keep you from being puffed up with any thing which God hath endowed you with.

1. Labour to be thoroughly acquainted with your self. 'Tis Ignorance or an imperfect Knowledge of your self that puffs you up. Labour to know your imperfections as well as your perfections, your wants and defects as well as your accomplishments. While Men look upon their better part, and are wholly taken up with the contemplation of those commendable things in which they excel some others, they begin to fall in Love with themselves, and fondly set too high a Price upon their own things. But if they would be persuaded to view themselves on the dark

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sider, and take a Survey of their Blemishes and Deformities as well as of their Beauties, they would see cause to think more soberly of themselves. Let it be granted that you have a good measure of Knowledge in some things, yet how much darkness and ignorance is there in many other things ! Whatever your opinion may be of your Knowledge, I dare confidently affirm that you are ignorant of much more than you know. But if you cannot be convinc'd but that you have something rare and extraordinary as to intellectual Perfections, then consider how 'tis with you as to Morals. If you see not enough there to prick the bladder of your Pride, it must needs be because you are extreamly blind and partial to your self. Where there is much Knowledge, and a large Talent of the endowments of the Mind, how little Grace may there be in the Heart ! How little Humility, Charity, Self-denial, Heavenly-mindedness ! How many prevailing Lusts, and Unsubdued Corruptions ! There is so much Sin and Guilt, so much Pollution and Defilement in every Man, that the Best, the Holiest Man if he understand himself aright, shall see much more cause to loath and ab-

abhor himself, than to be enamoured with himself in respect of any thing he hath. He knows little of himself who doth not know enough to humble him to the very dust, yea though we should suppose all the several accomplishments of the most excellent Persons in the World to meet in him.

2. Consider, that whatsoever you have, or may be supposed to have to commend you, Pride Marrs all. Tho' you had Angelical Perfections, yet Pride together with them would stain the Beauty, would fully and darken the Lustre of them.

3. Look away from your self and others; take Notice how many there are who far excel you in those very things that puff you up. This is that which the Apostle recommends unto us, *Look not every Man on his own things, but every Man also on the things of others.* Phil. 2.4. Men are apt to dwell upon their own excellencies, and foolishly admire themselves at Home, as if there were none to be compared with them; but if they look'd abroad, and that not with a design of observing the worst things of others, as usually Men do, but the best, they would soon be Cured of their good

opinion of themselves. They would see those who are far before themselves in those things in which they think themselves to be most eminent and singular; and they would besides discover many other Perfections or Commendable things in some of them which they themselves are wholly destitute of: This course would undeceive them, and bring them out of that Fools Paradise with which they are so much delighted.

4. Consider, the more you have in any kind, the more are you to be accountable for. *To whom much is given, of him the more shall be required.* Luk. 12. 48. If this were seriously thought of, the more any Man hath, the more would he be humbled. Wherefore as soon as you perceive your self to begin to swell in thoughts of what you have above others, to assuage and take down the Tumor, presently apply the humbling Meditation of the greatness and difficulty of your reckoning hereafter who have received so much. Oh think how much more easie their account may be who have received less.

5. Consider how odious a thing Pride is in the sight of God. *Solomon saith, Every one that is Proud in Heart is an abomination*

abomination to the Lord. Then which Prov. 16.
 expression, nothing could be higher to
 make us understand how hateful the
 Sin of Pride is unto God. And St. Peter
 saith, *God resisteth the Proud,* He oppo- 1 Pet. 5. 5.
 seth and sets himself against him, as a
 Man doth against his Enemy. *Ἀντιτάσσεται*,
 'tis a Military term; God sets himself
 in Battle Array against him; for that
 properly the word imports.

6. Set before you the Beauty and
 Loveliness of Humility. The humble
 Person finds favour in the Eyes of God
 and Man, but especially in the Eyes of
 God, *who giveth Grace to the Humble,*
or Lowly, Prov. 3. 34. *Who exalteth the*
Humble, Matth. 23. 12. *Dwells with*
him that is of a contrite and humble Spi-
rit, to receive him, Isaiah 57. 15. *Hears*
the Desire or Prayer of the Humble, Ps.
 1. 17. *Forgetteth not the Cry of the*
Humble, Psal. 9. 12. *Who saveth the*
humble Person, Job 22. 29.

And so I have done with this proper-
 ty of Charity.

Now follows the Fifth Verse, in
 which we have four other properties of
 Charity. *She doth not behave her self*
unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easi-

ly provoked, thinketh no evil. The first of these is, that Charity doth *not* *behave it self unseemly*, *ἐκ ἀσχημονειν*, doth not do indecent things, or doth not carry it self indecently or unbecomingly. I shall not trouble you with the various rendring, and explication of this word, the recital whereof would amount to little more than the loss of so much time. When all is done, our ordinary rendring of it, as 'tis most agreeable to the most usual acception of the word, so it best suits the Apostles intention. For Charity, the Nature and Properties whereof he is Discoursing of, disposeth and frames a Man to a Decency and Comliness of Behaviour towards those with whom he converseth. And indeed Love also puts a Beauty and Comliness upon our Actions and Carriage. Yea many times the things that might otherwise appear unseemly, when Love hath the managing of them, acquire a Beauty and Comliness. When therefore the Apostle saith that Charity doth not behave it self unseemly, we must understand it of such indecencies as are repugnant to Charity. And there are many of these; I shall give some few Instances, and then after a very little Appli-

Application dismiss this Property, and pass on to the next.

1. Imperious and proud Carriage shall be one Instance of unseemly Behaviour. When a Man shall take upon him, and assume to himself more than belongs to him : when he shall arrogate and usurp to himself a Power, and as it were a kind of Authority over others, who are, it may be, his Equals, if not his Betters : and if they be his Inferiours, yet ought they not to be so treated ; neither is there any decency in such a Deportment towards them. A kind of Behaviour indeed most indecent, absurd, and odious in the Eyes of all Persons of Sobriety, Humility, and Modesty. Charity never taught any Man to carry himself in that manner. That Grace is not of an assuming, arrogating, or imperious nature. Love oftentimes intreats where she might command, and in many cases freely parts with some of her Power, rather than assumeth more to her self than she can justly challenge. Love stoops, and makes her self lower than she is, abating somewhat of her stature, and not standing a tip-toe to make her self taller than she is. Love can interpret and accept
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of those Things as Kindnesses, which were in truth due Debts. She knows how to carry her self as if she were obliged, and some special Favour were done her, when she receives but her dues, and what could not have been justly denied her. But a Man of a proud and imperious Temper makes the most of every thing that may help to raise him higher, and advance him above others.

2. Another Instance may be in coy and disdainful Behaviour. When People converse with others at such a distance and remoteness, as if they scorned them, and thought themselves too good for their company: when they so carry themselves, as if they would have others count it a great favour and dignation that they will vouchsafe to look upon them. This is that which all sorts of Persons take offence at; how mean soever they be themselves, they cannot brook this kind of Carriage in those who are of the highest degree. This affectation of state, and keeping a distance, hinders the chief offices of Love, which cannot be performed by Superiours, unless there be Condescension, openness, liberty and
freeness

freeness of Converse with their Inferiours. This reservedness and shyness, shuts up Hearts, tyes up Tongues, and obstructs the passages of intercourse between Men. But Charity is not shy nor disdainful, no not when she converseth with Persons of the meanest Quality. She affects no such state or distance but that she can, where is just cause, condescend to a freeness, sweetness, friendliness and familiarity of Converse with those who are much beneath her. She knows how to become all things unto all for their good, as the Apostle did. ^{1 Cor. 9.} She well understands the meaning of ^{22.} that Precept of *serving one another by Love.* ^{Gal. 5. 13.}

3. Another Instance may be in perverse thwarting and contrary Behaviour. When we are so cross, so full of opposition and contradiction, that we will be pecking at every thing ; nothing can be said but we will have somewhat to say against it ; nothing can be done but we will have an exception at it. When we are ever watching to catch at any thing whence we may raise matter of Quarrel and Debate ; when Men are possess'd with such a spirit of Contradiction and Gain-saying, that

that they are never well longer than they are quarrelling with some body. This is a Carriage not more unbecoming us, than contrary to the nature of Love. Charity takes no pleasure in Crossness and Contradiction; she is soft and gentle, yielding and compliant in all things, wherein Compliance may be without Sin, and especially where by an innocent and harmless Compliance, she may have the better Opportunity of furthering the spiritual welfare of any; her constant study and practice is, according to the Apostle's Exhortation, *Rom. 15. 2.* not to *please* her self but *others*, *for their good to Edification.* Charity doth not watch for occasions of picking Quarrels, but studiously waves and passeth by occasions when they come in her way. Charity studies Peace, and is well skilled in all the lawful Methods and honest Arts for preserving it. She will not flatter, nor lye, nor betray the Truth, nor comply with any in their Sin, to preserve Peace; but so far as Peace and Holiness may consist, she is for pursuing it to the utmost of her Power.

4. Irritating and provoking Carriage may be another Instance of unseemly
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Behaviour. *There are whose words are as the piercings of a Sword,* as Solomon speaks *Prov. 12. 18.* who are so keen and cutting in their Language, and so provoking in their Behaviour, that he must have a great measure of Patience, and a great command of his own Spirit, that can converse with them but one hour, without some Disturbance. These Persons are unfit for Humane Society: the retirements of a Cell, or the solitariness of a Wilderness, were fitter for them, where they might meet with no Body, whom they might disturb by their provoking Language and Behaviour. Charity is of another Temper: her great care is so to speak, and so to carry her self, as no breaches may be made upon the Spirits of any through her means. She is for soft and healing words, *the Law of Kindness is in her Tongue,* as Solomon speaks of the virtuous Woman, *Prov. 31. 26.* Charity studies that Behaviour which may give no Offence to any, but help to make up Breaches, and heal such Wounds as have been formerly made. And O how becoming, how graceful and decent is this Behaviour! How doth it adorn the Person of what Quality soever, all
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whose Speeches and Deportment are thus influenced by Love, are thus commanded, over-ruled and managed by Charity ! *'Tis an ornament of Grace to the Head, and as Chains about the Neck,* as Solomon speaks of Wisdom and Instruction, Prov. 1. 9.

5. Reproachful and abusive Behaviour. There are many of such a scornful and jearing Disposition, as no Man shall escape the lash of their abusive Tongues ; and for the most part, the more inoffensive and harmless any Man is, the more they endeavour to expose him, and make him ridiculous to all the Company. These Persons have so inured themselves to abusive Language, mimical Gestures, and contumelious Carriage, that if they be abridg'd of this liberty, they are at such a loss, as they seem not to be themselves. If they come into any Company where the eminency, gravity or piety of any Person present, layes a restraint upon their ill-governed little Wit, and scurrilous Tongues, they are off the hinges, and have nothing to say. If they be not allowed to sit them down in the seat of the scornful, they are out of their element. And is not this a very decent
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and becoming thing, for a Man to make it his Business, in all places where he dares, to render others ridiculous, and in the mean time to make himself the Fool in the Company? Let no Man say, there is no Hurt nor Indecency in these things. The Apostle censures *foolish Talking and Jesting* as unbecoming Christians; how much more when besides the frothiness, levity and vanity of them, they also tend to the disparagement and vilifying of others, and to the rendring of them contemptible! Solomon saith, the Lord *scorneth the scorers*; and that *Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools*: Fools such Scorers are in the Wise Man's account, how witty and ingenious soever they may be in their own Eyes. And David makes it one part of the character of a good Man, that he *sits not in the seat of the scornful*. Let Men plead for their abusive Levities, and unbecoming Extravagancies, this way as long as they please, our Saviour hath said enough in a few words, to make all their Pleas utterly insignificant, and unavailable. Of every idle word that Men shall speak, they shall give an account at the day of Judgment.

Eph. 5.4.

Prov. 3.

34.

Prov. 19.

29.

Psal. 1. 1.

Mat. 12.

35.

Judgment. Must you give an account of every idle word, and do you think you are not to be accountable for your scoffing and jeering, for all your flouts and gybings, for all your contumelious and reproachful speeches? But that I may not too much divert from the Subject which I was treating of, Charity doth not dictate nor allow such things as these. She hath a respect for all Men according to what is praise-worthy and commendable in them. And as for what is amiss, Love hath a mantle to cast over it, and cover it. She speaks all the Good that with Truth she can of all; but as for what is Evil, she takes no delight in making that the Theme of her Discourses: much less doth she take any pleasure in catching at Imprudencies and Indiscretions to make sport of them; and least of all doth she make a mock of what is Good in any Man, and turn his best Things into matter of reproach. In a word, Charity hath a tender regard of the good Name and Reputation of others; and if she can preserve it, and add to it, she will; but to detract from it, or to speak or do any thing to the impairing and prejudice of any Man's good Name,

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is that which she neither will nor can do; 'tis contrary to her Nature. I speak of Charity now as such, as purely considered in it self: but alas! how little have we of it! How much sinful Corruption in several kinds is mingled with it! And consequently how short do the best come of acting according to the dictates of Charity, and of living up to the Royal Law of Love, which if observed, all our Miscarriages, in these and all other matters, would be at an end. Let us long and pant after that time, when perfect Love shall cast out whatsoever is contrary thereunto.

6. *Passionate and furious Carriage.* When Men will be so outrageous and frantick upon every occasion, as they are more like untamed and fierce wild Beasts, than like Men endued with Reason, to command and govern their Passions. This is a Behaviour so unseemly, that even they who are not concerned therein, cannot stand by and behold it without shame and blushing. And though many times there may be excellent Things in Persons who indulge themselves in these uncomely outrages, yet these excesses blemish all their

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commendable Qualities, and cover their Graces with such a dark Cloud as much hinders the Beauty and Lustre of them from shining forth and appearing. But here Charity would rebuke these Exorbitances, and allay these violent Tempests. Charity would becalm the Soul, scatter the black Clouds that overcast it, and make all clear and serene within. Love would quiet and sweeten the Spirit; Love would keep it in a meek, patient and undisturbed frame. And though sometimes Occasions were given, yet Charity would not see them, or would silently and quietly pass by them, as unconcerned in them.

7. Base and niggardly Carriage may be another Instance of unseemly Behaviour. When Men through Parsimony and Covetousness will not understand the Decencies of their Places and Conditions; nor be sensible of what is fit for them to do in reference to the Supplies of the Wants and Necessities of their Brethren. When they purposely turn aside and look another way, where their Assistance is required: When they grudgingly and unwillingly give a Penny, where it may be a Shilling, or a Pound, were more suitable to their own Quality,

Quality, and to the exigency of the Occasion. But here also Love is free and bountiful, open-hearted and open-handed, and so hates to do indecent things, that in doubtful Cases she ever chooseth the Errour on the Right-hand, rather than that on the Left; to do with the most rather than with the least, to exceed and over-do, rather than to fall short of her Duty.

8. The last Instance shall be in obscene and filthy Speeches, light and wanton Behaviour. Some there are who think nothing graces their Speech, or commends their Converse, more than such Words and Actions, as are not only unseemly, but odious in the Eyes of all sober Persons; and which none delight in, but they who have arrived at that measure of Boldness that they blush at nothing. This Instance I confess may not seem so proper and pertinent to the Apostle's design in this place; but it being so common a Mis-carriage in these Times, when Filthiness is grown impudent and shameless, I thought it not amiss to mention it however. And though it be not so exactly agreeable to the Apostle's present scope, yet neither is it altogether wide

of it : For we may find upon a very little Inquiry, that this kind of unseemly Behaviour is also repugnant to Charity, in divers respects.

(1.) As it offends chaste Ears : Charity would not give Offence to any by Speech or Behaviour.

(2.) As it tends to the corrupting of others. *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners.* And this is that which Charity would much more avoid.

1 Cor. 15.
33.

Now a word or two of Application, and I shall have done with this Property of Charity.

Use. From what hath been said we are still further informed how small a portion of Charity we have attained, and therefore what cause we have to bewail our defect therein. How many ways, and in how many respects are we guilty of unseemly Behaviour ! How many Indecencies do we run into in one kind or other every day. Let us reflect upon our selves, and be humbled where our Hearts condemn us : and let's still impute all to our want of Love, and be much ashamed that we should have no more of that excellent Grace which is the fulfilling of the Law, and

and the sum and abridgment of our whole Duty. And to the end we may henceforth demean our selves as becomes the Gospel, and be guilty of no such Indecencies as are unsuitable to our Profession.

1. Let us labour to get more Love. *Charity doth not behave it self unseemly.* She is the best Mistress to teach us what is becoming us as Christians, and what is not : For Charity will also sweetly frame and mould us to a Behaviour suitable to those Rules which she layes before us. He that hath much Love, hath an inward Principle of Decencies, which will stand him in more stead for the framing and regulating of his Behaviour, than all the outward teachings in the World. The Apostle writing to the *Thessalonians*, saith, that they needed not that he should write unto them concerning Brotherly Love ; for they were *taught of God to love one another.* 1 Thess.

'Tis God that infuseth the Grace of 4 9.
Love ; and he that hath it, according to the measure in which he hath it, is taught of God to behave himself with that Christian Comeliness and Decency which is suitable to his Profession, and to that high and holy Calling with which he is called

2. Keep the sense of God's presence upon your Heart ; be in the Fear of the Lord all the day long ; in all Places and Companies remember that he is with you, and is a witness of your Words, and a spectator of all your Actions. The presence of a sober, wise, and grave Man, for whom you have a Reverence, how careful and solicitous will it make you to carry your self in a decent and becoming manner before him ! And how much would it trouble you afterwards, if you should have been guilty of any Indecency in his Eye and Presence. How much more then would the constant sense of God's Presence engage you to behave your self in all respects so, as might become his Presence !

SERMON V.

1 COR. xiiij. 5.

— *Seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil.*

I Go on to the next Property of Charity; *She seeketh not her own.* That is, *She seeketh not her own* Things to the prejudice, or with the neglect of the concernments of other Men. A Man may lawfully seek his own things, mind his own affairs, and manage them as prudently as he can with reference to his own advantage, provided that this be done regularly and orderly. And a Man then, and then only seeks his own things regularly, when he doth it Charitably, or when therein he observes those Rules which Charity prescribes. And they are as to this matter, those two but just now mentioned.

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The 1. of which was, that a Man seek not his own things to the prejudice of his Neighbour. He may not seek to gain by his loss, or to raise his Estate by any means whereby his Neighbours is impaired.

2. Neither is he to satisfy himself in that he hath not sought his own advantage in such ways as tend to the hindrance of his Neighbour; but he must also, even while he is endeavouring to benefit himself, have respect to the advantage of his Brother, and so manage his own affairs as to endeavour to carry on his Brothers Interest together with his own. He must desire and endeavour that his Neighbour may live in the World, and thrive as well as himself. And this is that which the Apostle intends, when he saith, *Let no Man seek his own, but every Man anothers Wealth.* And as 'tis in matter of profit, so likewise in any other thing; we may not so seek our own ease, or our Credit, or our Safety, or any thing else that any way conduceth to our comfort here, either to the prejudice or with the neglect of our Neighbour. We may not ease our selves by burthening him, nor lay the Foundation of our Reputation in

1 Cor. 13.
24.

in the Ruines of his, nor provide for our safety by exposing him to those dangers which we will not approach unto or come within the reach of our selves. That 'tis the Nature of Love to prompt us to seek, provide for, and pursue the good of the party beloved as our own; and in many cases to make us willing to lay aside for the present, the consideration of our own concerns that we may be helpful to him, is that which no Man can be ignorant of, who ever had any experience of the workings of Love in himself. Certainly he loves no Man, nor ever knew by any experience of his own what the nature of Love is, who needs any other proof hereof, than the workings of Love within his own Breast. If there be any Person in the World whom you truly and intirely Love, consult your self, enquire how you stand affected to that Person, and then say whether the Apostle hath not rightly described Love by this Property, that it *seeketh not her own*. By way of Application,

1. We are hence yet farther informed how little true Charity there is in the World. It was the Apostles complaint, *Phil. 2. 21. That all seek their own*. And there

there is undoubtedly as much cause still for the same complaint. He is a rare Man in our days, of whom it may be truly said, that he seeks not his own things; that in all his affairs and transactions takes into consideration the Welfare of his Brother; that consults his good as well as his own.

1. In matters of profit and advantage, is not this for the most part the course of the World? Is not this the common Vote in which most Men agree; let me be a gainer, and then no matter who be a loser? How many unwarrantable practices really prejudicial to their Neighbours, do Men allow themselves in for their own advantage. If their gain come in, whether by Fraud, or over-reaching their Neighbour, or Lying, or Perjury, or Extortion, all is one, *Bonus odor lucri ex re qualibet*, their gain is sweet and acceptable to them, they smell nothing in it that is offensive though it be scrap'd together in the most dirty and stinking ways imaginable. So they may thrive and rise stoutly, others sink and be undone; they will not concern themselves therein.

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2. As to the matter of Ease, are we not as much for our selves here also? Who is there almost that will be willing to take any Burthen upon himself that he may ease another Man? Who is there that studies not to ease himself by casting as much burthen upon others as he can? In private Families, if any Service be to be done that hath somewhat of trouble and difficulty in it, 'tis who can shift it off from himself, and leave it to be done by others. In matters of a more publick concernment, is it not the great care of most Men to be as favourable to themselves as 'tis possible, whoever else be overcharged thereby. If there be any publick Service to be undergone in which they may be useful to the place in which they live, how do they draw back and decline it? What endeavours are there for keeping it off from their own Shoulders, and devolving it upon others? In such Cases, where is the Man that readily and chearfully comes on to take imployment upon him for the common good, and the rather that he may ease his Neighbour who is less able to undergo it? Where is he that in cases of this Nature, when any publick Service for God and
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his People, attended with difficulty and hazard, should be undertaken, is of the Spirit of *Amasai* the Son of *Zichri*, who offered himself willingly unto the Lord, *2 Chron.* 17. 16. So for Rates and Payments, is not every Man for easing himself, though that cannot be done but the burthen must fall so much the heavier upon others?

3. If any thing be to be undertaken that hath any hazard or danger in it, then their only business is to take care for one, they will be sure not to venture themselves, any body else shall rather be put upon it, though perhaps none were more concerned therein than themselves.

4. In what concerns Mens Credit and Good-name, many a Man consults himself how much soever his Neighbour be injured thereby. If he can by a Lye or a false Oath, or by a false and scandalous imputation roll off the blame from himself, and cast it on another, he cares not who suffers, nor how wrongfully soever, so he may thereby secure his own Reputation, and rescue it from that disgrace and ignominy, which he most justly deserves. But Charity in all these and other such like cases seeketh not her own,

own, consults not her self, nor her own Interest in any kind to the injury or damage, to the prejudice or disadvantage of any other. Wherefore that we are generally so much for our selves without any consideration of the condition and interest of our Neighbour, is an undeniable proof that we have but very little of that Grace that seeketh not her own.

Use 2. Let us not therefore allow our selves in this excess of Self-Love that makes us so utterly regardless of the Welfare of our Neighbour. Let us not be so narrow-spirited as to mind only our selves, and design only our own advantage. Let us not so confine our Thoughts, our Counsels and Projects to our selves, as to exclude the regard of our Neighbours good. Let us consult his Benefit, and carry on his Interest together with our own. Let us be so far from desiring to advantage our selves by his prejudice, as that we willingly deny our selves, and let go our own advantage where we find it cannot come in but through his Loss. And where we may by a little trouble or inconvenience to our selves be able to do our
Neighbour

1 Joh. 3.
18.

Neighbour a good Office, and ease him of some part of his burthen, let us not grudge at it, nor think much of what we undergo for him, but be glad we have an opportunity of manifesting our Love to him in that which doth not cost us nothing, in a way which is not without some difficulty and incumbrance to our selves. Let's readily embrace such occasions of giving a proof of the reality of our affections towards him, and of letting him know that according to St. John's Exhortation, *We Love him not in Word neither in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth.* Now the better to dispose and frame our Hearts to this Temper,

1. Let us often set the Rule before us, That we Love our Neighbour as our selves; and that we do to others whatsoever we desire should be done to us. Even Natural Conscience will tell us that thus it ought to be. For who is there who would be well contented that another should gain by his Loss, or Rise by his Fall? Who is there that would not desire and expect that his Neighbour should be sometimes willing to undergo some small inconvenience for him, where his Benefit, or Safety, or Comfort is much concerned?

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2. Consider, that no Man is made for himself alone ; 'tis one great end of his Being, that he might be helpful and serviceable to others, as their condition or occasions shall require it. He that minds none but himself forgets the end of his Being, and why God sent him into the World.

3. Not to mind and concern ourselves with the good of others as well as our own, breaks the bonds of Humane Society, and directly tends to the dissolution of all useful and comfortable intercourse between Man and Man, and consequently to the Subversion and Ruin of Mankind. Take away those mutual Offices of Love by which one Man is helpful to another, and let every Man be at liberty to cast off the care of the good of others and mind only himself, and what will the issue be but that Men Prey one upon another, and devour one another as the greater Fishes do the lesser ?

4. In seeking the good of others you seek your own. No Man is a loser by being useful to others. Besides the comfort that he hath in the Conscience of the discharge of his Duty. God for the most part finds a time
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to recompense him here, by disposing the Hearts of others to be as helpful and serviceable to him as he hath been to his Neighbours. But however, he shall be sure to be recompensed at the Resurrection of the just, *Luke 14. 14.*

Eph. 6.8. Then whatsoever good thing any Man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

And so I pass on to the next Property of Charity ; *she is not easily provoked.* Of this Property I shall not speak much, because I have already spoken a great deal which might here have been said, when I handled the first Property, that *Charity suffers long.* When the Apostle here adds, that *Charity is not easily provoked*, his meaning is, that small and inconsiderable things do not provoke her, at least do not so provoke her as to stir up any abiding or lasting displeasure. Some sudden surprizals and incursions of Anger there may be, but such as are quickly blown over and vanish away. To take up fixed and irreconcilable displeasure upon every little trifle is not agreeable to the Nature of Love. Charity will either prevent displeasure upon such occasions, or quick-

quickly compose and quiet the Spirit, and reduce it to an even and sedate posture again. And as for things of an higher Nature, especially those in which the Glory of God and the Honour of Religion is concern'd, here not to be in some measure moved and concerned, is to be stupid, and regardless of what should most nearly touch us. To be Angry is not simply and Universally unlawful. Anger is a Natural affection which God hath planted in the Soul; and he never put any thing into us which is in its own Nature Evil. Only our care must be to keep it under Government, and so to order and regulate it as it may not transgress its bounds; and if at any time it do, our next care must be to call it in again and moderate it as soon as we can.

Now as to smaller matters which may occasion disturbance to us, of which I suppose the Apostle chiefly speaks in this place, there may be diverse preservatives and antidotes against the Distempers which we are subject to from the influence of them.

As First to be much in the consideration of Gods Providence which extends unto and orders all such small things.

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Not an Hair falls from your Head without his Providence. And why then should you be so much disquieted if a Glass fall from the Shelf, or a Cup slip out of the Hand of him that is bringing it to you ? There is the hand of God even in these small things thus disposing of them ; and many times his principal intent therein may be to try your patience, why then should you not quiet your self in his Providence ?

2. Consider that such small things are beneath your displeasure ; they are not worthy for which your Peace should be disturbed. Will you suffer your Spirit to be disquieted, put out of order, and rendred unfit for any thing that is good for such a trifle as a Cup or a Glass, or it may be for that which is of much less value ?

3. Seeing you are for the most part surprized by the suddenness and unexpectedness of these smaller things, and disquieted before you are aware of it, be ever in a readiness to entertain such sudden accidents with quietness and patience. And to this end make use of the advice which the Heathen Moralist gives, often put the Case to your self, and say, what if such or such a thing should

should be ? Should I presently so much forget my self as to be out of all patience ? You are now about to sit down at Table ; say to your self, What if a Cup of Beer should be spilt upon my Cloaths, or a Glass fall down and be broken, or a Dish slip out of the Hand of him that carrieth it ? What if a Servant being sent for one thing should bring me another ? What if the Dish of Meat which I Love should be spoiled in the Dressing ? Must I upon occasion of such poor trifles be transported with as much Passion as were enough and too much for the saddest and most dismal accident that could befall me. I am going into Company, what if I should meet with some little affront there ? What if some Body should contradict me, oppose me, and give me the Lye ? What if a word should be spoken in which I am reflected on ? Shall I forthwith be all of a flame ? and fly in the Face of him that offers me that indignity ? Shall I let loose my Head-strong Passions to the disturbance of all the Company ? No, I am resolved for this time (God enabling me) to do my utmost to keep my Heart in such a quiet frame as nothing may disturb me. Come

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what will, my fixed purpose is not to give way to my turbulent and unruly Passions. Putting such cases as these, especially where we are likely to meet with occasions of disturbance, and strengthening our Resolutions against the impressions of whatever may come in our way to discompose us, might be of great use to prevent those Distempers with which we are apt to be overtaken; provided that in all our Resolutions we take God along with us, and look up to him for the assistance of his Spirit and Grace, without which all our endeavours signify nothing.

4. You who are so ready to be discomposed and put out of order by small things, meer trifles, think with your self how you should be able to bear great things? *If thou hast run with Footmen and they have wearied thee, saith the Prophet, Jer. 12. 5. then how wilt thou contend with Horses? And if in the Land of Peace whercin thou trustedst they wearied thee, how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?* Say to your self, am I so transported at the loss of such a Toy? how should I do if an Enemy broke in upon me and spoiled me of all that I have, as in those miserable Countries abroad

abroad where the outrages of War are such as no Man almost is secured of the Possession of any thing he hath? Doth a jeer or a scoff so much disturb me? How should I bear it if I should be persecuted for my Religion to the Death? And if I should be called to lay down my Life for Christ's Sake, and to bear witness to the Truth with my Blood? Shame your self with such Questions as these, and reason your self out of your weak and impotent Distempers. Exercise your self to Patience, Quietness and Composedeness of Spirit in smaller matters, that when God shall hereafter see good to call you forth, and make Trial of your Faith and Patience in forer things, and much harder to be undergone, you may be able to quit your self as one who hath been accustomed to the the Yoke; as one that hath learnt the great Lesson of Patience, by lesser Trials, and therefore is not now altogether to seek how he should demean himself under such things as are not meer scare-crows and bugbears, the shadows of afflictions, but afflictions indeed. And here let none say in his Heart, I hope I shall never be put to the Trial in things of so high a nature. Flatter not your

self, nor give way to Carnal security ; you know not what a Day may bring forth ; and therefore 'tis your safest course so to improve higher Trials and Exercises of your Patience, as you may be thereby fitted to undergo greater Tryals if God shall think fit to lay them on you.

And so much of that property of Charity : Now follows the last property mentioned in this Verse ; *Charity thinketh no Evil.* Οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν. The word λογίζεται in this place is capable of being rendred several ways.

1. It signifies to impute or reckon ; as *Rom. 4. 8. Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin* ; where the same word is used. So at the third verse of the same Chapter, *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for Righteousness*, ἐλογίσθη, it was reckoned or accounted to him for Righteousness. So here in the Text, as some conceive, Charity imputeth not Evil : That is, though Men have done amiss many ways, and though perhaps they have done a Man many injuries, yet Charity overlooks and passeth by what is bad in them ; even their wrongful
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and injurious actions it doth not take notice of to impute them to them, and charge them with them, much less doth it study to be revenged on them. Charity in such cases so carries it self as if it did not see such Evils, or such injurious carriages, and doth no more reckon them or impute them to them, than as if no such things had ever been. But on the contrary, whatsoever good there is in any Man, that Charity espyeth and takes notice of, that it reckons and imputes to them, commending them and rewarding them for it, as there is occasion. Whether this be the Apostles intention in this place, or no, I cannot determine: but certainly this is the nature of Love. And oh how little have we of it, who are so Eagle-eyed, and sharp-sighted to spie out what is evil in others, and especially those injuries which any have done us, imputing them to them, and charging them with them to the full, and making the charge much heavier than it is that we may take our Revenge on them to the utmost: But as for what is good, that we will not see, or we see it with an Envious and Malignant Eye, lessening

it and disparaging it, blemishing and blasting it as much as we can.

2. Another signification of the word λογίζεται there is, which some think to be suitable to the Apostles meaning; *Charity thinketh no Evil*, that is, she doth not plot, contrive or design Evil. So is the phrase of thinking evil taken, *Gen. 50. 20. Ye thought evil against me*, saith Joseph to his Brethren, *but God meant it unto good*, that is, ye designed and contrived evil against me. So a Learned Man very probably conjectures that διαλογισμοὶ πονηροί, Matth. 15. 19. *Evil Thoughts* that proceed out of the Heart must be understood to be evil Machinations, or Plottings of evil against Men. This the Scripture expresseth by framing mischief, as *Psal. 94. 20. by devising mischief*, *Psal. 36. 4. Prov. 6. 14*, by imagining mischief, *Psal. 62. 3. by travelling with Iniquity*, and conceiving mischief, *Psal. 7. 14*. And nothing can be more contrary to the Nature of Love than this is. All the designs of Charity are for the good of others. She studieth how she may be helpful and beneficial to any; she is for no such plots as are of a pernicious or destructive tendency. *The liberable Man deviseth liberal things*, saith

saith the Prophet, *Isaiah* 32. 8. So the Charitable Person deviseth Charitable things. All his Thoughts, Counsels and Contrivances run in that Channel: but as for mischief, and all mischievous Counsels and Machinations, Charity hath nothing to do with these, unless it be to counterwork them, to prevent them, and blast them if she may. The Authors of pernicious Counsels, and of all the Contrivers and Abettors of them, Charity saith as *Jacob* did of *Simeon* and *Levi*, *Gen.* 49. 6. *O my Soul come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine Honour, be not thou united.*

Consider this all ye who take such delight in doing mischief, that you are never in your proper Element longer than you are engaged in some wicked design, longer than you are Travelling with some mischief or other. If these be the fruits of Charity, then tell me what the fruits of Hatred, and Rancour, and Malice, and Revenge are. And if your Heart that should be full of Charity toward your Brother, be full of Hatred, Ill-will, and Malignity against him, then learn of *St. John* what your condition is: *He that loveth not his Brother abideth in Death. Whosoever hateth*
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1 Joh. 3.
14, 15.

his Brother is a Murtherer ; and ye know that no Murtherer hath Eternal Life abiding in him. Wherefore tremble at the extreame danger of your present Estate, and be not at rest until you have gotten out of it. But I shall not any farther pursue this Argument : for it is not very probable that the Apostle reckoning up those properties of Charity which give the highest commendation thereunto, should among them bring in this, that she doth not imagine or contrive mischief ; this being so wicked and odious a practice, that it cannot well be numbred among the highest excellencies of Charity, that she is not guilty of it. Charity hath more excellent things to commend her than this, that she is not malicious and mischievous.

3. The word may be taken for thinking Evil, as that phrase imports, suspecting Evil of any Man : which Sense, as 'tis natural and no way strain'd or forc'd, so 'tis most agreeable to the Apostles scope, and therefore I shall insist on it more largely. *Charity thinketh no Evil*, or suspecteth no Evil ; that is, without just ground and sufficient cause of suspicion. Neither doth it hastily think or suspect Evil where there is some small

small ground of suspicion. But yet however Charity is not blind, nor doth it wilfully shut its Eyes. Where there are just and apparent grounds of Suspicion, she can see them ; and where she sees them, she can suspect Evil. To fear and suspect Evil where there is apparent cause of Suspicion, is so far from being inconsistent with Charity, that 'tis frequently a Fruit of Charity. Our Love, and our great desire of the Good of those whom we love, makes us the more apt to fear, and where cause is, to suspect that Evil of them, which we wish and earnestly desire they may be free from. In some cases a Man may offend in not suspecting Evil of others ; I mean, where there are apparent and considerable grounds of Suspicion ; when Men will not fear or suspect those Evils which they cannot but suspect, if all Things be duly weighed. And yet thus often 'tis, and that from several causes.

I. From a predominancy and excess of fond Love, and inordinate Affection, as in many too indulgent Parents. So inordinately do they love and affect their Children, that though they have had many warnings to look narrowly after

after them, and many intimations of their Misdemeanours, yea, possibly as good as undeniable Proofs, yet all must be well concerning them; they will see, they will fear, they will suspect nothing.

2. It may be from deep carnal Security; because Men are void of Care, and concern not themselves with others, though they be near them, and specially obliged to look after them, they fear not, they suspect not those Evils by them, which they have sufficient Reasons to suspect, were they not mindless and regardless of them.

3. It may likewise be from Sloth and Laziness that Men suspect not Evil, though there be just grounds for it. They are unwilling to take the pains of making search to inform themselves how things are; and therefore they are willing to believe that all is well. They are not willing to suspect Evil, because they are not willing to put themselves to the trouble of inquiry. But whence-soever it be that we will not suspect Evil, where there is just cause of suspicion, both the Sin and Danger thereof are sometimes very great.

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(1.) The Sin may be great where there is a Trust committed, and in that respect a special Obligation to watch over others, as in Magistrates, Parents, Ministers, Tutors, Guardians, Masters of Families, and the like. Here not to fear and suspect Evil where there is just cause, is unfaithfulness, and no better than a betraying of their Trust.

(2.) The Danger also that is consequent thereupon, may be as great as the Sin. How many sad Evils might have been prevented, if there had been an holy Jealousie, and timely suspicion of those Things which Men had cause enough to suspect, if they had carefully observed matters, and looked about them, as the Duty of their Place and Relation did require ! Yea, if they would but have admitted of those true and seasonable Informations which were given them !

But to return to the Business of the Text. *Charity thinketh no evil*, is not apt to entertain suspicions or surmises of Evil, upon every slight and frivolous occasion. In doubtful matters she evermore inclineth to think and judge the best. And where there be strong grounds

grounds of fear, and suspicion of Evil, even there Charity so suspects Evil, as she still heartily wishes it may prove otherwise; and is most glad if it so do. This is the nature of Love in such cases; she fears and suspects the worst, because she cannot do otherwise, as the circumstances of Things are laid before her; but while she fears and suspects, she desires to hope too, that Things may be better than they seem to be. Suspicion of Evil is not a thing that she takes delight in: 'tis her trouble that she seeth such grounds of Suspicion; and you cannot do her a greater Kindness, than by giving her that better Information of Things, whereby she may be delivered from her Suspicion, and see it was causless. We have a notable Instance hereof *Josh. 22.* in the Carriage of the *Israelites* towards the two Tribes and half, who had built an Altar by the Borders of *Jordan*. The *Israelites* suspected they had built it to offer Sacrifice thereon, which had been directly contrary to the Law, forbidding them to offer their Sacrifices any where else than before the Tabernacle, wheresoever that should be. But
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when the two Tribes and half utterly disclaimed any such Design, and protested that they only built that Altar to be a Monument of the Interest they had, together with the rest of the Tribes, in the true God, and in that way of Worship which he had instituted; and that they were so far from having any thought of departing from the Lord, that contrarily their intent in erecting that Altar, was to ingage their Posterity to cleave unto the Lord, and that way of Worship which he had set up, for ever: I say, when the *Israelites* were thus informed touching the truth of the matter, how welcome was this Information to them! How gladly did they find Reason to lay aside their Fears and Suspicions! And how affectionately did they bless God in behalf of their Brethren, that he had kept them from that Sin, which they suspected they might have been guilty of! So I proceed to Application.

Use 1. This again discovers to us the weakness of our Charity, that we are so extreamly prone to think Evil of others upon slight grounds.

1. How

1. How easily and readily do we entertain Suspicions of Evil against our Neighbour ! And how glad are we of any shadow of Reason to do it ! Any pretence shall serve the turn to beget in us an ill Opinion of him

2. How do we frame to our selves, and invent Arguments to strengthen our groundless Suspicions when once entertained !

3. How hardly are we delivered from them ! We will not easily let go a causeless Suspicion, tho' there be clear evidence to the contrary.

4. After that our Suspicions have been removed by the evidence of Truth, yet how easily do we return and take up the same Suspicion again, upon the smallest and slightest new occasion presented.

5. How glad are we, upon all occasions, to whisper our groundless and uncharitable Surmises into the credulous Ears of others !

6. How willingly do we listen unto such Whisperings our selves, and of how quick and easie Belief are we in Things of that nature ! And this even against those Persons, of whom we
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have had all Reason to retain the best Thoughts. Where almost is there any Person to be found of such Innocency, Integrity and Unblameableness, against whom you would not be ready to harbour evil Surmises, if any other Person should but whisper into your Ear his groundless and uncharitable, suspicious or hard Thoughts of him? Would you not at least thenceforth begin to question whether you were not before mistaken in him, and had not entertained too good an Opinion of him? Ask your own Heart, and see if it be not thus with you? I do not say you will presently yield to such uncharitable Jealousies; but do you not observe your proneness to give way to them, do they not arise in your Heart? And do you not find it an hard matter to keep them down and suppress them? Now how undeniably doth this prove that our Hearts are very little seasoned with that Grace, whose Property it is, that she thinketh not Evil?

Use 2. Let us therefore set our selves against this Corruption, and labour to subdue it. Whensoever we observe that

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our uncharitable Hearts begin to entertain evil Surmises against any Man, upon weak and frivolous grounds, let us beat them down, and suppress them. There are several Considerations that may be helpful to us herein.

1. Consider, that in suspecting Evil of others lightly and groundlessly, you cross our Saviour's Rule, and the very Dictates of Nature ; you so deal with your Neighbour as you would not be dealt with your self. You would take it very ill if others, upon no grounds, or upon any weak and unwarrantable grounds, should harbour evil Thoughts of you. Where 'tis your own case, you would cry out against such a Practice as most uncharitable, and most unjust also. Why then should you allow your self in that which, you your self being Judge, is so repugnant to Justice and Charity ?

2. Consider, that the more Charity you have for others in judging of them, the more Charity you may, upon any Occasion, expect from them. They who are wont to judge charitably of others, shall find that others will be inclined to judge charitably of them ; and they
who

who are accustomed to censure others hardly, and to pass uncharitable Judgment upon them, shall find that others will judge as hardly of them. This is the Argument by which our Saviour dehorts us from rash censuring : *Judge not that ye be not judged : For with what Judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged ; and with what measure ye meet,* Matth. 7. 1, 2. *it shall be measured to you again.*

3. Consider how often you have in the Issue found Things otherwise than according to your uncharitable Surmises; and then you have condemned your self for your Rashness. Some Evil hath been done, and in your Thoughts you have strongly charged one with it, who afterwards hath been vindicated by the voluntary Confession of the Party that offended. You have lost something, as you suppose ; and immediately you charge an innocent Person with it in your rash Surmises. Not long after, it may be, it appears the Thing was safe in your own keeping, you having forgotten where you laid it up. In such ways as these you have many times wronged others greatly by your rash and causeless Suspitions. Take heed

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therefore that you resist this your corrupt Inclination ; and never dare to allow your self to suspect Evil of any Man, unless there be sufficient grounds for so doing.

4. Groundless Jealousies and Suspicions are many times very grievous and and afflicting to the Persons themselves who entertain them. How much needless Trouble, Disquiet and Vexation, do they create to themselves by their ungrounded Suspicion of those Evils which were never in being, nor ever intended or thought on ! A charitable frame of Heart towards Men, how many such causeless Troubles and Vexations doth it free us from ! How many disquieting and perplexing Fears, how many anxious and solicitous Thoughts, how many Passions and sinful Distempers doth it prevent ! He who suspects no Evil without Cause, is not disquieted and afflicted without Cause, is not scared with Bug-bears, doth not terrifie himself with the vain Shadows, and false Representations of Things that are not, nor ever will be ; is not transported with Passion, is not incensed with Anger against those who
never

never meant him Evil. So then if there were no other Reason for it, yet in reference to his own Peace and Quiet, it would concern every Man to labour to keep his Heart as free from all uncharitable Surmises as possibly he can. He who gives way to them, while he injures others, punisheth himself.

recommending him I will. So that if
 there were no other Reason for it
 yet in reference to his own Peace and
 Quiet, it would concern every Man to
 labour to keep his Heart as free from
 all uncharitable Thoughts as possibly he
 can. And who gives way to them
 while he remains in this, puts himself in

SERMON VI.

I COR. xiiij. 6, 7.

*Rejoyceth not in Iniquity, but rejoyceth
in the Truth :*

Beareth all things,——

HAVING done with the Fifth Verse, the Sixth Verse follows, which contains one Property of Charity more ; *She rejoyceth not in Iniquity, but rejoyceth in the Truth.* For the right understanding of which words, we must first inquire what is here meant by *Iniquity* and *Truth* ; and then in what sense Charity is said *not to rejoyce* in Iniquity, but in the Truth. As to the former of these, Iniquity is in this place to be taken in the largest sense for all manner of Sin, and not strictly for Injustice, or wrongful dealing, as the word indeed most properly signifies. In that larger sense is Iniquity often taken in Scripture ; it is needless to

mention the places. And so consequently Truth is here to be taken, not as it stands in opposition to Errour, or Falshood, but to Sin. So then to rejoyce in the Truth, is to rejoyce in what is good, vertuous, laudable and agreeable to Truth, or the Rule of the Word. That Truth in this place must of necessity be so taken, is evident, because it could not else be opposed to Iniquity, as we see it is. Thus is Truth taken, 3 *John* 4. *I have no greater joy than to hear that thy Children walk in Truth* ; that is, that they do what is right and good ; that they walk holily and unblameably. Now whereas the Apostle saith, that *Charity rejoyceth not in Iniquity*, we must understand it not of a Man's own Iniquity, but of the Iniquity or Sins of other Men, which we at any time either hear of, or observe in them. Now we may rejoyce in their Iniquity two ways.

1. As loving it, approving of it, delighting in it, commending and applauding them for it. Thus many being very bad themselves, take great pleasure in the lewd and vile practices of others, loving their Persons so much the better, and taking so much the
more

more content in their Company and Acquaintance ; and likewise upon all occasions relating and making report of their wicked pranks with a great deal of delight and satisfaction to themselves. This some conceive to be the meaning of the Apostle in this Character of Charity. And 'tis certainly most contrary to the Nature of true Love, of that Charity or the Grace of Love which the Apostle in this Chapter recommends unto us. For Charity would affect us with grief when we observe the misdemeanours and wickedness of Men. When Men shall take delight in the Sins of Men, and *Rejoyce when they do evil*, as the Prophet speaks, *Jer. II. 15.* 'tis a most convincing and irrefragable Argument, that they are utterly void of any true Love either for God or Man. If they truly loved God, how could they take pleasure in what he hath strictly forbidden, in what he perfectly hates and abhors, and is an abomination to him, in what reflects dishonour upon his Name, provokes him to wrath, and which he hath threatened to punish with everlasting Damnation ? And if they had any true Love for Men, how could they take pleasure in those their
sinful

sinful practices which deprive them of God's Favour, derive upon them his displeasure, expose them to his fierce wrath and indignation, together with all the sad and dismal effects thereof both here and hereafter?

Hence we may infer that whatsoever kind of Love there is found among wicked Men, grounded only upon their likeness to one another in Sin, and the affection they all have for the same lew'd and ungodly practices, is so far from having any thing of the Nature of the Grace of Charity, which the Apostle here describes, that it much better deserves the Name of Hatred than of Love. For if I Hated any Man with the most rank and deadly Hatred, how could I more evidently discover it than by rejoycing in that, by applauding and encouraging him in that which will most effectually promote, and most unavoidably end in his Eternal Ruin? Let not therefore lew'd and ungodly Men please and flatter themselves in the Love they have for their graceless Companions, the mutual delight they take in the Society of one another, and the agreement there is between them in the like affection which they all have for the
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the ways of Sin. This is a most sad Love that unites them in wickedness, that divides them from God and all good Men, that links them together in a Confederacy with the Devil, and a Covenant with Hell. Cursed be that Love, for 'tis cruel, and that Friendship for 'tis Treacherous. A cruel Love indeed that Murthers Souls ; a Treacherous Friendship that betrays them to everlasting Misery. O break off that wicked Friendship, that destructive combination in ways of Sin, all you who are ingaged in it. Cast off that ungodly Love which if you entertain it, will prove a viper to eat through the Bowels of them that cherish it.

2. We may rejoyce in iniquity, take pleasure in the Sins and miscarriages of others out of the disgust we have against them, and the ill-will we bear them, rather than as either approving of their Vices or affecting their Persons. And this perhaps is the thing which the Apostle intended, or chiefly aimed at. True Love rejoyceth not in the miscarriages, slips, falls of others, but is rather grieved at them ; but rejoyceth when they do well, when they walk unblameably, keep close to the Rule :
when

when they persevere constantly in the profession of the Truth, and frame their Lives accordingly; when they Honour God much, serve their Generation faithfully, do much good in their respective Places and Stations, *and shine as Lights in the World*, as the Apostle speaks, *Phil. 2. 15.* In this respect the Apostle calls the believing *Philippians* who walked up to the Rules of the Gospel, his *Joy* and his *Crown*, *Phil. 4. 1.* So also writing to the *Thessalonians* who walked suitably to their Profession, and kept close to God, he saith, *What is our hope or joy, or Crown of Rejoycing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? Ye are our Glory and Joy,* 1 *Theff. 2. 19.* And St. *John* in the place before mentioned, 3 *John 4.* professeth, that he had no greater Joy than to hear that his Children did *walk in the Truth.* That 'tis the Nature of Love not to rejoyce in the miscarriages, but in the good actions, and laudable conversation of others, is manifest from what hath been already spoken. Love stands thus affected, both in reference to the good of the Persons themselves, and to the good of others, to say nothing here of the Honour of God, which
also

also Love to God makes a Man tender of.

1. Love wisheth well to the Person himself whose Conversation we observe, and unfeignedly desires and seeks his good, especially his Spiritual and Eternal good. Whence it follows that it cannot but rejoyce when he doth well, and grieve when he doth amiss.

2. It rejoyceth in his doing well, and is aggrieved at his miscarriages also in reference to the good of others who may be several ways indangered thereby.

1. They may be in danger of receiving hurt by his evil Example, and of being thereby drawn aside into the like sinful courses.

2. They may be in danger of suffering together with him; for the Sins of one or a few particular Persons sometimes draw down the judgments of God upon the Community, upon the whole place where they live.

3. Religion suffers by the miscarriages of particular Persons, and the faults of some are, by wicked Men objected as matter of reproach unto all. In all these respects Love rejoyceth not in the miscarriages of others, but takes them
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to Heart, lamenting them, and mourning over them. But where Charity is wanting 'tis quite otherwise. Uncharitable Persons will be troubled at what is good in others, and malign them for it, and rejoyce in what is done amiss by them. They will be glad when they stumble and fall; and the fouler and more dangerous and scandalous their falls are, the greater content they take in them. And it were well if this rejoycing in iniquity were only to be found among wicked Men who are wholly destitute of Charity. But alas! this is a Disease that is more common than so. I am afraid there are very few of us that are not infected with it more or less. We may not always be able to observe it in our selves; but certainly he must have attained a great measure of Charity in whom this corruption doth not sometimes, and upon some occasions discover it self. For our better information herein, and to the end we may be the better able to examine our selves, and to judge how 'tis with us as to this matter, I shall endeavour to shew, both where especially this Distemper appears, and how it discovers it self. As concerning the first of these, it must be granted

granted that this corruption being in some good measure subdued and mortified in some Persons; doth not ordinarily put up the Head, and shew it self, but upon some special occasions, which as it were awaken it and stir it up. And they are such as these which follow,

I. When there is a competition between two Persons; when they are both Suiters for some Place, Imployment, or Preferment. If then any miscarriage, or slip or fall be observable in the one of them, by which he is disparaged, it will be hard for the other Party not to take some content therein, and be glad of it, unless he be endued with an extraordinary measure of Charity; and moreover have a great command of himself, and be very watchful over his Heart. In that case nothing could fall out more according to the desires and wishes of most Men, than that something should befall their Competitor by which some blemish and disparagement may stick to him. To be guilty of some weakness, and much more to have been overtaken with some scandalous offence at such a time, would be matter of Joy and Triumph to most opponents; and scarce any Man nearly concern'd

cern'd in the competition would escape without, some touch at least of that Distemper which Charity is not guilty of.

2. When a Man takes a fall, and is guilty of some miscarriage who was before the object of a Man's Envy. When he who to your regret and trouble excels you in Gifts or Parts; or who hath more Love and Acceptance with those whose favour you would inhance and appropriate to your self; or who to your Grief thrives more in the World than you do, and gets before you in his Estate; I say when such a one who is already in some of these respects, or any other respect the object of your Envy, takes a fall, and is guilty of some misdemeanour that much reflects upon him and lays him lower, it will be difficult to keep your self from rejoycing in his fall. Though your corruption should have been laid aside before, yet 'tis a Hundred to one but that this would awaken it and set it a-work. It would hardly be but you would feel that you are apt to take more inward content in his miscarriage, than Charity alloweth, or is ever guilty of.

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3. When that Person slips or falls by whom you have formerly suffered much, and from whom you have received great injuries. In that case, tho' you be a Person who allow not your self in Revenge, yet it will not easily be but that upon such an occasion you will feel some grudgings of it within you more or less in the content which you perceive your corrupt Nature would take in his fall, did you not carefully suppress it and keep it down. Notwithstanding all your care to keep your Heart in a Charitable frame towards that Person, you are sensible of that within you which tells you that a little thing would make you glad at his Calamity.

4. When the Person who hath fallen is of a different way from us as to matters of Religion, or ways of Worship. We are not all agreed as to those matters; we are not yet so happy as to have one Heart and one way, as to be all of the same judgment in the things that concern the Worship of God, to glorifie God with one Mind and Mouth, and to Worship him with one consent from one end of the Land to the other. Now such is our weakness that we find difference of Judgment

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and Practice in things relating to the Worship of God, beget in us distances and alienation of affections, and these too often produce open feuds and animosities. Seeing we cannot be so happy as to be of one way, 'twere well if we could be of one Heart, and that our affections might close where our Judgments cannot. But now as things are with us, let one fall who is not of our Way or Judgment, do we not observe that we are more apt to take some content therein, than to grieve at it? And would not some of us be glad if there were many more instances of miscarriages amongst those who are not of our Mind? If any Man can truly say he never felt the workings of any such corruption within him, I think he is more happy than most are who are zealously engaged in one side or other of different Parties. There is one thing that too clearly shews how much content Men of all sides and parties take in the miscarriages of those who are not of their own number; and that is, that they so willingly listen to, so readily believe, and so gladly report any thing that may be matter of reproach to those who differ from them. This is a proof beyond

yond exception of the Complacency we have in their delinquencies.

5. When we have openly appear'd, and much declared against any Person, and have been therein contradicted and opposed, then also are we apt to be glad of the advantage of any fall or misdemeanour of his, thereby to make good what we are engaged in. His Sin is then acceptable to us as furnishing us with a new Weapon to defend the cause we have undertaken against those who have contested with us.

6. In a word, whensoever the miscarriages of others are like to make way for our advantage whether in point of Reputation, or Estate, or Preferment, or any other particular Interest, then do we lye under a great Temptation to be better pleased with their falls than they are allowed to be who should Love their Neighbour as themselves, and stand affected towards his good or hurt, repute or disrepute, Spiritual and Temporal Weal or Woe, Happiness or Misery, as unto their own. The truth is, we have all by Nature so much self-love, that we are scarce concern'd with any Mans Welfare but our own, we neither care what befalls others, nor what becomes

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of them so that it may be well with us, and our Interest may be carried on. Thus, I mean, it is, so far as corrupt Nature prevails and is not over-powered by Grace. And so I have in some Instances shewed where this our corruption which disposeth us to rejoyce in the miscarriages of others, doth especially discover it self.

Now concerning the next thing, how our rejoycing in other Mens Sins discovers it self, the less need be said, because I have spoken something to it already very briefly. Therefore,

1. The content we often take in the Sins of others is discovered, in that we so gladly take notice of and observe other Mens slips and infirmities, or grosser miscarriages. How quick sighted are we to espy out such things! And how apt to pry into them, whereas the good things that are in them, their commendable and praise-worthy actions, and performances which deserve our notice and observation, we overlook and will not see.

2. In that we so willingly here, yea so greedily listen to the report of their evil actions, and entertain them with so ready and easie a belief. The things
which

which we would not have to be, which we are sorry for, and troubled at, we neither so attentively listen after, nor so readily give Credit to. If a Man hear a flying Rumour that his dear Friend is Dead, or that a Child, or some very dear Relation hath been overtaken with some reproachful miscarriages, he will not easily believe the one or the other, because desiring it should prove otherwise, he is willing to hope it will so do.

3. The Pleasure and Content we take in reporting the Evil we have heard of others. When we once have gotten such a story by the end, we Travel of it presently till we are again Delivered of it; the next Person we meet shall be acquainted with it, every Company we come into shall ring of it: or if we would seem more Modest, favourable, and sparing in reporting it, yet we never leave whispering it into the Ears of this Man, and of that, and of a third, till at length through our means all the Town be full of it. But the faults of our dearest Friends and Relations, which we are sorry to hear, unwilling to believe, we are also as sorry and unwilling to speak of. These we would not

have to be ; but if that cannot be prevented, then our next care is to conceal and bury them, that they may never come to be known.

4. In that we content not our selves to have reported them again as they were reported to us, but we oftentimes add to them, amplifie them and enlarge them ; improve them by our devised glosses, sinister constructions, uncharitable guesses and conjectures concerning the circumstances of them, and imply all manner of Artifices to gain assent to the truth of them, and to render them more credible. Would any Man do thus in reporting the things which he is heartily sorry for, and earnestly desires may be otherwise than hath been reported to him? Doth not this way of managing the report of what he hath heard, plainly shew that he would be very glad the Evils he hath heard of his Brother may prove to be true, and that he would fain have it believed that they are so? Now to apply all in a word.

Use 1. This also still further lays open to us our Shame and Nakedness, I mean the defect of our Charity. O how little Love have we who can thus rejoyce in Iniquity,

Iniquity, take pleasure in Mens Sins which are thir greatest Misery, and will without Repentance prove their Ruin? Few of us, I think can be so blind, or so much strangers to our selves, but that we often take notice of this corruption in us. And can we take notice of it and not loath our selves for it? What, to take any content in that upon any account whatsoever, that threatens the Eternal Destruction of your Brother, this is not only contrary to Charity, but even to Humanity it self. He that shall allow himself to do it, may rather be esteemed Cruel and Barbarous than Uncharitable. Is Love *the fulfilling of the Law? The bond of Perfectness?* Rom. 13. 10. *The Great Commandment*, and the very Col. 3. 14. Sum and Abridgment of all that Duty which we owe to God and Man? And Mat. 22. 38, 39. have we all this while attained no more of this excellent Grace? O how small a progress have we made in Sanctification? What cause have we to be ashamed that we should be still at this low ebb, after that we have enjoyed such means of Grace, and have been so long under the teachings and discipline of Christ?

Use 2. Let us not be at rest till we have attained such a measure of Charity as the Sins of others may be matter of grief and trouble to us ; even the Sins of those whose miscarriages we are in any respect most apt to rejoyce in. Whensoever you feel your self inclin'd to take any content in that which is the Sin, and consequently the Misery of any Man, O check the first grudgings of such a vile Distemper, and say, should I in compliance with mine own sinful Interest in any kind take pleasure in that which above all things in the World I should take to Heart and bewail both in my self and in others ? Ah vile and wretched Heart of mine, that such cursed and abominable corruption should ever harbour there ! Though I cannot be fully rid of all the remainders of it, and perfectly cleanse my Heart from it, yet I am resolved it shall never have the least allowance or encouragement from me, much less will I permit it to Reign and have Dominion over me. God enabling me, I will set my self against it with all my strength, and still pursue it with an irreconcilable Enmity, never giving over till I see the Death of it. Nothing shall satisfy me less than a perfect conquest

quest and total victory over it ; which fruit of my fighting against it, if I may not expect here, yet I shall not cease to press hard after it, and long for that time, when these my present conflicts with corruption shall be at an end, and Sin and Temptation shall never more assault me, nor create me any further molestation or trouble to Eternity.

The Seventh Verse now follows, *Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.* Here the Apostle reckons up four other Properties of Charity. The first of these is, that *Charity beareth all things.* Which words must not be understood without some limitation and restriction. *Charity beareth all things* that are fit to be born.

I. *She beareth all things* that may be born lawfully, and without the Sin of the Person bearing them. In some cases it may be a great Sin to bear things, especially in those who being in place of Government have power to punish Sin, and ought not to bear the Sword in vain. It was *Eli's* great Sin, and the Ruin of his Family, that he bare the vile and abominable practices of his
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Sons, not punishing them according to the demerit of their hainous offences, *1 Sam. 2. 29, 30, &c.* And it was the high commendation given by Christ to Angel of the Church of *Ephesus*, *Rev. 2. 2.* that he *could not bear them which were Evil.*

2. Charity beareth all things, the bearing whereof is not hurtful to the Person born with. The thing which Charity aims at in bearing, is the good and not the hurt of others: and therefore the good of others is the Rule and Measure of her bearing. So far as it may conduce to, and consist with the real benefit and advantage of others, she bears, and no further. So our Saviour who was full of Love to his Disciples, bare with them in many things, and sometimes made an Apology for their infirmity, *Mat. 26. 41. The spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak,* and yet where he saw his bearing with them would be prejudicial, and of dangerous consequence to their Souls, he sharply rebukes them; a notable Instance whereof we have in *Peter's* Case, who had taken upon him to rebuke his Master, and to dissuade him from suffering, which was the end of his coming into the World, and

and without which *Peter* and all the World must have perished everlastingly. *Mark* 8. 32, 33. Thus also the Apostle makes the good of our Neighbour to be the Rule and Measure of our bearing any thing amiss in him. *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves. Let every one of us please his Neighbour for his good to Edification, Rom.* 15. 1. 2. Where we may observe that infirmities if they be not of a dangerous Nature, and especially if we see the Persons themselves in whom they are, labouring under them as an heavy Burden, Mourning for them, striving against them, we must not be harsh, severe, and rigorous against them, but bear with them, and pass by these their failings. But how far must this our bearing be extended? So far as may really tend to their good, and make for their Edification and no further. Our unmerciful harshness and unreasonable severity might discourage them, scare them away from us, shut their Hearts against whatever other good they might receive from us, and many other ways prejudice them, whereas our bearing with them in the case before mentioned, would do them no hurt, but
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open a way for our being many other ways helpful and beneficial to them. But if the Evils we observe in them be of dangerous consequence, and especially if we observe that they either discern not such Evils in themselves, or too much allow themselves in them, then our bearing with them, would be for their hurt and not their good, for their Destruction rather than their Edification.

3. Charity beareth all things that are not considerably and unreasonably prejudicial to a Mans own Person or Estate. Smaller prejudices in either kind we must be contented to bear; yea Charity will sometimes prompt us to bear some things that are hard to be born when the good of our Neighbour is much concerned in our bearing of them. But yet however when we are extreamly injured, and things are very prejudicial to us, we may in lawful ways seek to be relieved, and make use of those Remedies which Gods Providence suggests. God hath appointed the Magistrate to right the injured, to take off the Yoke, *To undo the Heavy Burthens, and let the oppressed go free*, as the Prophet speaks, chiefly as I suppose in reference to those who
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were in place of Magistracy and Power over others, *Isa. 58. 6. to break the jaws of the wicked, and to pluck the spoil out of their teeth, Job 29. 17.* Wherefore 'tis not contrary to Charity in cases of considerable Injury received, to have recourse to God's own Ordinance for that redress which he hath there provided for us : only we must here be cautioned, that when we apply our selves to the Magistrate, we do it charitably ; that is, not in way of Revenge on him that hath wronged us, but purely to right our selves. Thus we have seen how far Charity bears, and what necessary limitations the right understanding of this Property of Charity requires. And yet though it be thus limited, 'tis of large extent however. I might spend much time in shewing the extent of it, had I not already spoken much to it, in handling the first Property of Charity, *ver. 4. that it suffereth long.* Briefly therefore :

1. Charity beareth the Weaknesses, and Infirmities of others, though troublesome and grievous to be born, according to that of the Apostle, *Bear Gal. 6 2. one anothers burthens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ.* What Law is that but the

Joh. 15.
12.

the Law of Love? *This is my Commandment, saith he, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* These their Infirmities how many are they, and who can reckon them up? Their Ignorance, their Waywardness, their Unteachableness; their Passions, their Sourness, their Crossness, yea, their Perverseness when under present Distemper and the Power of Temptation; their Unkindnesses, their Unthankfulness, the ill Requitals they make of good Offices done them; their Pride and Stoutness, their Censoriousness and Uncharitableness, their inordinate Love of themselves, and their seeking their own Things; their aptness to take pet upon every small Occasion, upon no Occasion; their readiness to misconstrue Things that were well meant; their proneness to take up, foment and cherish causeless Suspicions and Jealousies; their Impatience and Fretfulness, their Discontents and Murmurings, their Heats and Heartburnings, and many other Distempers very irksome and burthen some to others, especially to those with whom they most constantly and familiarly converse. All these must be born more or less, or there will be no living quietly and
peace-

peaceably in this World. Even those Things that are so extreamly bad as divers of these are, that they may not always be born with, but must in due manner, time and place, be reprov'd ; yet must they be born and past by many times for Peace sake, lest you should always chide, a thing which God himself doth not, how much soever provoked by us. O how large a field is here for this Property of Charity to expatiate in ! Here are Burthens enough to be born, if we had Charity enough to bear them as we ought. And as for those Things which you do not so bear, but that you endeavour by Reproof, or other suitable Means, to correct and reform them, yet you must bear them still for the most part, for they are not presently cured, as soon as the Cure of them is attempted. You may bear long and long, and bear more perhaps after you have endeavoured to cure them, than ever you did before. God complains, that when he would have *healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria.* This measure we must expect to meet with often ; when we would endeavour to heal the diseased Souls of those

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those that are about us, then the Malignity of their Disease breaks forth, and discovers it self worse than before; and so all that for the present we gain by our Endeavours, is, that we make our selves more work, there is so much the more for us to bear, and to exercise our Charity on.

2. Charity beareth hard Things and troublesome Services, is willing to take Pains, to undergo labour and travel, when others may receive Benefit thereby, especially where it may tend to the Good of their Souls. The Apostle *St. Paul* abounded with Love, all his Writings breathe out Love. This his abundance of Love made him willing to take so much Pains, and undergo so many Hardships as he did, for procuring the Good, and furthering the Salvation of Souls. It made him more abundant in Labours, as he speaks of himself, not out of vain ostentation and boasting, but in way of just and necessary Vindication of himself.

2 Cor.

11. 23.

3. Charity beareth the offensiveness and unacceptableness, the noysomness and irksomness of poor and mean Services where they are necessary, and any Good may be done by them. It will

will not only undergo the most difficult Services, but stoop to the lowest and most unwelcome Employments. There is no Office of Love so mean that Charity sticks at, where there is a Call thereunto, and the present exigencies of others require her assistance. It was our Saviour's Love, as well as his Humility, that made him condescend to wash his Disciples Feet, an Employment in those hot Countries not very desirable, but that Love and Humility made it acceptable.

John 13.
4, 5.

4. Charity beareth in way of Suffering as well as of Doing. And this in a Man's Estate, good Name and Body.

(1.) Where much Love is, Men will be willing to undergo some Loss and Damage, to be thereby useful and serviceable to others; and especially if by a small Loss some greater and more considerable Good may redound to their Neighbour. St. Paul's great Love to *Onesimus*, whom being now become a true Convert, he calls his Son, and his own Bowels, *Philemon* 10. 12. I say, his great Love to him makes him willing to undergo some Damage, and to be at some Expence, to recommend him again to his old Master, from

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whom he had run away, and likewise as 'tis probable, wronged besides. *If he hath wronged thee, saith the Apostle, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it, ver. 18, 19.*

(2.) So as to a Man's good Name, Charity will make a Man slight the Censures, Evil-speakings, and Clamours of uncharitable and reproachful Tongues, where he may be useful to others. Love and Integrity in such a case would enable a Man to say with *Job, chap. 31. 35, 36. If my Adversary had written a Book against me, surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me.*

(3.) As to Bodily Sufferings, what fore Things did St. Paul chearfully bear and undergo out of his fervent Love to Christ and his Church ! We have a large Catalogue both of his Labours and Sufferings, unto the undergoing of both which, Love constrained him, *2 Cor. 11. 23.* and so on to the end of that Chapter.

Use. This again may convince us of our great deficiency in Charity. Let us reflect upon our selves, and consider
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how it stands with us in reference to this Property of Charity, and we may soon discern how little Charity we have attained, if we have any at all ; *Charity beareth all things* ; and we, it may be, can scarce bear any thing.

1. In reference to the Infirmities of others, how little can we bear ! So little do we consider the Frailties, and Weaknesses of others, that though many times we know their Miscarriages to be their Burthens as well as our Trouble, yet we have no Patience for them, or Compassion towards them. The least thing which we observe amiss in them, calls forth all our Spirits against them. And though towards some we have a little more forbearance, yet against some others we are so keen and quick, that scarce an unadvised word falls from them, but we are all in a flame.

2. As for undergoing any Labour or Travel, or putting our selves to the trouble of any difficult Service or Hardship for them, we are so far from this, that we are mostly for consulting and contriving our own Ease, though to the Disease and Trouble of others, and seeking how we may best cast off all

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Burthens from our own shoulders, and lay them on theirs. When the Exigencies of others call for that assistance from us that will cost us any Pains, or put us upon any Hazard, the usual Language of our Hearts is, spare thy self.

3. Neither are we any whit more willing to condescend to those lower Offices of Love, which the Providences of God, and the Necessities of others, call for at our hands. In Things of this nature, how nice and coy, and squeamish are we, at least too many of us ! How averse are we from setting our hands to Things which are, as we judge, below us, and unworthy of us ! Whereas Charity thinks nothing below it, by which it may be serviceable to others.

4. As for bearing in way of suffering, whether in Estate, or good Name, or Body, these are hard Things, and Charity deals not kindly with us in requiring them of us. We have too much of Self-love to be well-pleased with these Matters, when there is nothing but the Interest and Good of others to reconcile us to them, and make us like of them. And yet how much

much will the same Persons bear and undergo for themselves, that will bear nothing that is difficult to be born for others ! What continual Toyl and restless Travel do many choose to undergo for improving their Estates, or gaining Renown, or compassing a Design ! In Things of this nature, where their own Interest is concerned and carried on, nothing is too hard to be undergone. Here Men ride and run, tug and labour, to the spending of their Spirits, the wasting of their Strength, the impairing of their Health, and the shortning of their Lives.

So for Parents, how many Inconveniencies, Troubles, Incumbrances and Anxieties, how much Labour and Travel do they willingly undergo for their Children, because they being a part of themselves, they have strong natural Affection for them ! If they be in any Danger, how full of solicitous Cares and endless Perplexities are they for them ! If they be at any time sick, what Cost and Expence, what continual Watchings and Attendance, what Labour and Travel is enough for them ! And all this for those many times who, in respect of their tender Years, take
Q 3 little

little notice of what is done for them. But however Love and natural Affection repent not of any thing that hath been expended. Whether they regard it or no, Love still goes on, and thinks it can never do too much. When a Man would be apt to think that all Love had been now exhausted and spent, yet it's renewed again, and the spring of natural Affection runs afresh; Love is still as willing, and laborious and active, and as far from being tired out or spent, as if it had but just now begun to work. But now let Self-love, and natural Affection, and such other low Considerations as we are mostly acted by, be laid aside, and where almost is the Man who purely upon a Spiritual Account, and from the noble, genuine, and truly generous Principle of Charity, would or could chearfully undergo one quarter of this for any Person that is no other way related and tyed to him, than by the common bond of Religion? Now what's the matter? How comes it to pass that it should be thus with us? Doth not holy Love, the spiritual and excellent Grace of Charity, work as strongly and sweetly as natural Affection, or Self-love, and
much

much more? It must be granted that it doth so; but the truth is, we have but a little of this holy flame of Love within us. Self-love and natural Affection are strong, but true Charity is weak; and if there were no other Argument to prove the weakness thereof, this were evidence enough of it, that we are so weak and deficient in this Property of Charity; that whereas *Charity beareth all things*, we can bear so very little purely upon the account of holy Love, and from that spiritual Principle of true Charity, which the Apostle here describes. Let us all be humbled for our wants, and earnestly seek after the supply of them from him, who is *the God of all Grace*, 1 Pet. 5. 10. *who is able to make all Grace to abound towards us*, 2 Cor. 9. 8. not only those outward Blessings which the Apostle there speaks of, but all spiritual Blessings likewise; and who giveth liberally and without upbraiding to those that ask, *Jam. 1. 5.* who is much more ready to give his Holy Spirit to those that ask him, than Earthly Parents are or can be to give good things unto their Children, *Luke 11. 13.*

SERMON VII.

I C O R. xiiij. 7.

— *Believeth all things, Hopeth all things, Endureth all things.*

I Go on to the next Property of Charity ; She *Believeth all things*. As the former Property, so this also must be understood with some Limitation. Charity doth not absolutely believe all things without any difference or distinction.

For First it doth not believe things that are apparently otherwise. It doth not believe things against clear and undeniable Evidence to the contrary.

2. Neither doth she believe where there are but greater and stronger probabilities to the contrary. In these Cases 'tis not the Property of Charity to believe. Because,

1. This were most Irrational. Charity is guided and led by the Light of right Reason

Reason in all its actings ; but it should be blind if it should believe against clear Evidence, or against stronger probabilities for the contrary to what she believes. There can be no obligation from Charity to such a blind and irrational belief.

2. In these Cases it were not only irrational but impossible to believe. For the understanding cannot but follow the Light and Evidence which it hath ; 'tis not in the power of any Man to offer violence to his own Reason, and to be of such a belief only because he will. Well then, setting aside these cases, *Charity believeth all things*, that is, all things for the best, and as inclining toward the better part still. To the end we may the better understand how far this property of Charity extends, I shall endeavour to give you the whole Latitude and Compass of it in these ensuing particulars.

1. Where things that are Good or Evil concerning any Man, that tend to his Commendation or Disparagement, that concerns his Guilt or Innocency, are barely propounded, and nothing offered by way of Proof or Evidence, one way or t'other, there Charity believes

believes the best concerning every Man, till she sees reason for the contrary. Charity seeks not to raise Suspensions and Jealousies, nor sets a Mans Wits a-work to invent Reasons and Arguments to incline it to the worser part: but takes things fairly as they lye before it, and makes the best of them for the advantage of the party concerned.

2. Where things of this Nature are doubtfully propounded, where there are many Reasons and Probabilities for the one side and the other, and the whole matter is almost equally poised, or where 'tis hard to judge on which side the probabilities are greater, yet if there seem to be but the least advantage for the better side, there Charity helps to turn the Scale that way, and inclines a Man to believe the best, till he be overpowered by Arguments for the contrary.

3. Even where there seems to be greater probability for the worse than the better, yet still Charity shews its willingness to believe the best, and so in some Sense, I mean, in Affection and Desire believes it. And this its Affection and Desire to believe the best, it discovers several ways.

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1. By being troubled that she sees not such full and clear grounds of such a belief, as she desires.

2. By suspending all peremptory and absolute determination of the business, till further enquiry be made, and things be better cleared.

3. By being Heartily glad to see Reason to believe, and to find things cleared for the better side.

4. Hoping things may be cleared up better, which at present have an ill Face and too much appearance of that which Charity Heartily wisheth may be otherwise. This is the Nature of Charity; she *believeth all things* for the best where there is any tolerable grounds of belief, or any the least credibility in things; and where she cannot believe, she is troubled that she cannot, and desires to be rid of her disbelief, upon any justifiable grounds, or reasonable Terms.

To apply this briefly. *Use.* This also may further discover to us, how very small those measures of Charity are which we have arrived at. How should we blush to consider how little of this property of Charity is discoverable in us.

I. We

1. We are so far from believing all things that have any credibility in them, for the advantage of our Neighbour, so far from believing the best concerning him, that we most readily believe the very worst, and that upon the weakest and most uncertain grounds. Any idle Story or flying Report that tends to the Defamation and Reproach of our Neighbour, how ready are we to entertain it, and give credit to it ! Yea though it be against a Person whose Innocency and Integrity we never had the least Reason to question.

2. Where things are too apparently amiss, we are so far from being troubled that there should be any thing against him, the Evidence of the Truth whereof is such, that we cannot but believe it, that we seem to be glad that we have somewhat to charge him with, from which he cannot easily be cleared. We hug and cherish our belief of the truth of what he is charged with, and are unwilling to forgo it; and therefore we employ our selves to pick up and scrape together Arguments by which we may be farther confirmed in our ill opinion of him, and by which we may confirm others therein. Are these practices the
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fruits of Love? Are they agreeable to the Dictates of Charity whose property it is to believe all things that make for our Neighbour, and not against him, so far as they are such as are any way capable of being the objects of our belief? Are not these things the fruits of Ill-will, and Malignity of Spirit against him rather than of Love? If we did truly Hate him, and were his avowed Enemies, what could we do more than readily believe the worst of him, and be glad if we think we have sufficient ground for so doing? You who may possibly think you have attained a degree of Charity above many others, look in upon your selves, and search if you be not the Persons who are sometimes guilty this way: if you be, loath your selves for it, and for the future think soberly of your selves as you ought to think; think not your Charity to be greater than 'tis, but humbly acknowledge that you find it to be much less than sometime you thought it had been.

The next Property of Charity is, that she *hopeth all things*. In all things that concern others she hopeth the best that can Rationally be hoped. 'Tis true, as
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Charity cannot believe Irrationally, and against clear Evidence, or stronger probabilities to the contrary ; so neither can she hope against all Reason, and where the grounds of Fear, or Despair are so strong, that there remains no sufficient foundation for Hope to rest on. We Read indeed concerning *Abraham*, Rom. 4. 18. *That against Hope he believed in Hope.* Wherefore it seems that he Hoped even where no grounds of Hope were, and where all things looked the other way, and had such an appearance as there seemed to be no ground for any thing else but Despair : For what is it else to Hope against Hope ? But we must consider, that *Abraham* had ground for his Hope and he had not. He being now little less than an Hundred Years Old, and his Wife Ninety, according to the ordinary course of Nature there was no ground of Hope that he should have a Child ; but God unto whom nothing is impossible having promised it, he had a most sure and firm Foundation for his Faith and Hope. He Hoped, and that most Rationally, upon supernatural grounds, and building his Hope upon the immovable Foundation of God Almighty's Power
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and Veracity; and yet against Hope as to Natural Causes. I say therefore, our Hope must ever have a Foundation to rest on; for otherwise it would be a vain, empty and groundless presumption. Now though this property of Charity, that it hopeth all things, be of much larger extent, yet I shall at present speak of it chiefly with reference to Mens Spiritual and Everlasting Estate. If I should have considered it with reference to Mens Moralities, their Words, Actions, and Conversations, it would have been a hard matter to have said any thing of it, that would not have fallen within the compass of the former property, that *Charity believeth all things*. Wherefore waving all those things, I shall confine my self to the Estates of Men here and hereafter, shewing briefly, that *Charity hopeth all things* concerning Mens Spiritual and Everlasting Estate, that can Rationally be Hoped. Concerning Mens Spiritual Estate both present and future.

1. It Hopeth all things that can Rationally be Hoped concerning Mens present Spiritual Estate. I take Hope here in a large Sense, as 'tis vulgarly taken in common speech: for we usually apply

ply it, though not so properly, to present things, as well as to things not at present in Being, but that may be hereafter : As when we say we hope such a one is Alive, or in Health : Or that we understand such a thing, or have such a thing in our Possession. Taking Hope in this larger Sense, I say *Charity hopeth all things*, that may Rationally be hoped concerning Mens present Spiritual Estate.

For First it hopeth that true Grace may be where none clearly appears to be, so long as it sees nothing to the contrary ; so long as nothing is discoverable in the Person, that is inconsistent with True Grace. And there may be several grounds of this Charitable Hope.

1. Because Grace is small in its first beginnings, in which respect our Saviour compares the Kingdom of God to a grain of Mustard Seed, *Matth. 13. 31.* Hence it may well be that there may be some small beginnings of True Grace where none appears, or can be discerned.

2. The operations of the Spirit of God upon the Heart, and the work of Grace in the Soul are secret things,

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things of a very abstruse, hidden and mysterious Nature, especially in the first beginnings of them ; and therefore also Charity hopes there may be True Grace where there is no external discovery of it, seeing also there is nothing discoverable from whence it may be warrantably concluded there is none.

3. Many a Believer that now evidently discovers the work of Grace in his own Heart, cannot tell when God first began that gracious work in him ; and many a Believer now thinks he had True Grace long before that time when he thought himself to be utterly void of Grace. Hence Charity will reason thus ; if Believers themselves may not discern when God first begins to work Grace in them, and if long after that work is really wrought in them, they may not discern it, why should not I hope there may be Grace where I cannot yet discern it. I see nothing to the contrary, I discover nothing in them that clearly evidenceth there can be no Grace in them ; therefore I will hope the best.

2. Charity hopes there may be True Grace where some very great and considerable miscarriages are too apparent ; provided that the Persons do not openly
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justifie themselves in these things, but profess their disowning and disclaiming of them. Charity inclines a Man to hope that these miscarriages though very bad, may come under the account of infirmities; and that notwithstanding them, they may have *the Root of the matter in them*, as Job speaks, there may be some weak measure of True Grace at bottom. And this upon a three-fold ground. Job 19, 28

1. Because some great failings are frequently observable in many of those, of whom we dare not pronounce that they are not in the state of Grace.

2. The experience which the best Christians have of the many failings which they themselves are subject to, are to them a great inducement to hope Charitably of the Spiritual Estate of others, notwithstanding some great miscarriages.

3. 'Tis a very difficult thing to judge whether some particular miscarriages be such as cannot consist with True Grace, or no: For though in the general we know that True Grace cannot consist with the allowance of a Man's self in any known sin great or small, yet when we come to particulars, 'tis not easie,

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to say whether a Man alloweth himself or no in this or that Sin which he too often falls into. This we are sure of, a Regenerate Man may be too indulgent to himself in some Sins; for example, in Sloth and Idleness, Intemperance and a gratifying of his sensual Appetite more than is fit, too much Love of Earthly things, and too eager a pursuit of the World. You neither know the strength of those Temptations which perhaps he is assaulted with, nor what conflicts he hath with his Sin before he be overcome, nor how his Heart generally, and at other times stands affected towards it when he is not under the power of Temptation : The thing being very doubtful, whether or no he so far indulgeth himself in his Sin, as is not consistent with Grace, Charity inclineth to hope the best touching his Estate, tho' it utterly condemns his practice.

Add hereunto, that in many cases 'tis not easie to discern how far some Men are convinced of the evil of some things which others truly judge to be great Sins; and consequently it cannot be absolutely concluded that their falling often into them, argues such an allowance of themselves in Sin as utterly over-
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throws all Truth of Grace. Upon this account therefore, in such cases at least, Charity hopeth the best, as well as upon those other considerations before mentioned.

3. Charity hopeth there may be True Grace in those Persons who have but very little Knowledge, provided that they Conscienciously Practice that little which they know. The grounds of which hope are these,

1. Some Persons have very weak Natural Parts. It hath seemed good unto the Supream Lord of Heaven and Earth, the most Wise and Sovereign disposer of all things to deny them a capacity of that measure of Knowledge which he hath made others capable of.

2. Others have had small means of Knowledge; they have been born in dark places, and bred up in Ignorance. They have wanted most of those advantages, helps and furtherances for attaining Knowledge, that others have enjoyed.

3. Where God hath given little, there he requires so much the less, *Luke* 12. 48. as where he hath given much, there he will require the more.

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4. 'Tis not an easie matter to determine how little God may require of some, and how small measures of Knowledge he may accept of when there have been great disadvantages, and almost invincible difficulties in attaining Knowledge. God doth exactly weigh and consider the weakness of Mens Natural capacities, the smallness of the means of Knowledge that hath been afforded them, the disadvantages and prejudices of their Education, and whatsoever other have been the impediments, hindrances, and discouragements whereby they have been kept from attaining those measures of Knowledge which others have attained with much less difficulty, it may be with ease and delight; I say, God considers all these things, and accordingly makes them Gracious and Merciful allowances. And how large those allowances may be, and how far they may extend, we may not rashly define. Wherefore upon these grounds, Charity still inclines to hope the best touching the Spiritual Estate of those who seem to make Conscience of practising according to their Knowledge, although they know but very little.

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But as for such as have both abilities and opportunities of attaining Knowledge, but neglect and contemn them, Charity obligeth no Man to hope well concerning the present Spiritual Estate of these, as neither of those who make no Conscience of practising what they know be it more or less. As no Mans Knowledge shall stand him in any stead, or at all avail him towards his Salvation, who refuseth to walk according to his Knowledge, so no Mans Ignorance shall plead for him, who may know and will not. Wilful Ignorance doth not lessen but heighten Mens Guilt, and by consequence, will also, without Repentance heighten their punishment. There are a sort of People, concerning whom God saith, that he will *laugh at their calamities, and mock when their Fear cometh, when their Fear cometh as Desolation, and their Destruction as a Whirlwind ; when Distresses and Anguish cometh upon them.* And who are they that are so dreadfully threatned, but such as set at nought Gods Counsels, and will none of his Reproof ; who hate Knowledge, and will none of those Divine Counsels which the Eternal Wisdom of God propounds to them,

Prov. i.
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them, *ver.* 29. 30. Now should any Man think that Charity obligeth to hope well of the present condition and Spiritual Estate of these? This were to hope against the Word, against those expresse and plain Declarations concerning these Men, which God hath in Scripture made. This were to hope that they may be in the state of Grace whom God hath declared to be in the state of Wrath. And thus I have shewed that Charity hopeth all things that can rationally be hoped concerning Mens present Spiritual Estate.

2. Charity hopeth all that may rationally be hoped concerning Mens future Spiritual Estate; which I understand with reference to this Life. Though Men for the present *declare their Sin as Sodom and hide it not*, though they be openly Prophane, Debauched, and Porfligate; though they discover and proclaim upon all occasions their Enmity and Opposition, their Rancour and Malignity against what is good; and though for the present they seem to be wofully confirmed and hardened in their Sins; yet Charity hopeth there may be a change for the better hereafter; that the time may yet come when they may
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see the Errour of their Ways, truly repent them of their Sins, and be reformed. Charity is not forward to conclude, because Men are for the present extreamly bold, that they will never be better. The grounds that Charity hath still for cherishing some Hopes, that such as these may hereafter be reclaimed, are these.

1. God is able to work a gracious change in them ; there is nothing impossible with him. Such is the power of his Grace, that he can humble the stoutest Spirits, soften the hardest Hearts, and reclaim the most debauched and profligate Sinners.

2. We have often seen remarkable Instances of the Power of his Grace. He hath changed those who seemed to be as far from a change as any of the worst we know. And what he hath done, why may he not do again ? Thus Charity is apt to argue.

3. God hath no where declared the contrary : He hath no where absolutely pronounced, that such or such a Person, how bad soever, shall never be reformed.

4. God sometimes takes hold of the chief of Sinners to choose, and works
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on them rather than on some others, that he may thereby manifest the freeness, and magnifie the Power of his Grace the more. Upon these Considerations Charity inclines a Man not to despair of any, unless we could certainly know that they had committed the unpardonable Sin ; but to hope still that God may in his due time be pleased to *give Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth*, where at present the Heart seems to be at the greatest distance from Repentance. Hence it is that Charity is willing to take encouragement to raise and strengthen Hope from small things.

(1.) If the Sinner at any time seem but to relent a little, and to be in the lowest measure sensible of former Miscalriages.

(2.) If there be at any time the least discovery of any good Affections and Desires, though they quickly disappear and fade away.

(3.) If there be but a willingness to give attendance on the outward Means of Grace, though for the present no Good appear to have been gained thereby.

(4.) If

(4.) If there seem to be but a little less enmity and opposition to what is Good, than formerly.

(5.) If there be upon occasion but a renewing of Promises, that what is amiss shall be amended, yea, though such Promises formerly made have been often broken. From these and such like things, though small in themselves, Charity is encouraged to hope that the time may come when such a Sinner may obtain Mercy to be truly humbled, and effectually reclaimed. But however, where no such Incouragements as these last mentioned, can be observed, Charity, as hath been said, doth not wholly despair of any Man's Conversion as long as he is in the Land of the Living, and the Day of Grace is lengthened out unto him.

3. Charity hopeth the best that may rationally be hoped concerning the everlasting Estate of Men after this Life. I shall not much enlarge here; the everlasting Estates of particular Persons being a dark thing, the knowledge whereof God hath thought fit in great part to reserve to himself, it doth not become us to say much of it, much less

less to be too peremptory in our Judgment about it. Briefly therefore,

1. Where the Lives of Men have been tolerable, and any small appearance of Grace hath been discernable, Charity hopeth the best concerning such Peoples everlasting Estate. And good reason it hath for such an hope.

(1.) Because the truth of Grace, and not the measure of it, is that on which our Salvation depends. He that hath the lowest degree of true Faith is as certainly saved as he that hath the strongest Assurance ; and so for Repentance and other Graces.

(2.) Where a very small appearance of Grace is discernable, there may be a great deal more Grace within than there seems to be. Some through Modesty and Bashfulness conceal what God hath wrought in them ; and others are not able to express it, either through defect of Parts, or want of Language. As some make shew of much more Grace than they have, so others again make shew of less. Manifest Experience hereof we have in some Persons when they come to dye, or draw near their end. Many who made little shew of Religion in their Life, who went

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on all their days in a silent manner, as if they had little or nothing of true Piety in them, at last when they lay on their Death-beds, have discovered such Things to have been in them as never appeared before, unless perhaps to some very few who were intimately acquainted with them. They who at any distance observed their Conversation, could never apprehend there had been half that Good in them, which toward the close of their Lives they discovered, to the great Satisfaction of all that were about them, and sometimes to the Admiration of the Hearers.

2. Though Men have lived very ill, and though their Conversations have been most unsuitable to their Profession, yet if there be but any small appearance of real and sincere Repentance at last, Charity hopeth the best concerning their everlasting Estate ; and this,

(1.) Because 'tis a most undoubted Truth, that whensoever Men truly repent and turn to God, they are sure to find Mercy with him.

(2.) Considering the infiniteness of God's Mercy, where there is the least appearance of true and sincere Repentance,

ance, how late soever, there is much more to incline us to hope than to despair.

(3.) Though Sick-bed Repentance be often unsound, as afterwards appears, when Men upon their Recovery return to their old Sins, yet because when Men dye immediately upon their Profession of Repentance, 'tis impossible to know such Repentance to have been false and unsound, Charity hopeth the best. And though it be not to be questioned, but that many of those may perish concerning whom Charity hopeth well, yet are we not only allowed, but obliged so to hope; for as much as we can discern nothing to the contrary, but that the Repentance which such Men profess may be real and sincere.

3. Even when all Things look most sadly, and when Men live and dye so as a Man cannot but tremble at the serious Consideration hereof, yet here Charity is not forward to pass a peremptory and absolute Sentence concerning their everlasting Estate: Tho' a Man would not dye so for all the World, yet Charity forbids that we should absolutely pronounce such Persons

sons damned, but rather leave all to God, unto whom secret things belong. For though the Word assures us, that without Faith and Repentance no Man shall be saved, yet because we know not what God may sometimes do for miserable Sinners at the very last, seeing his Mercies are boundless, his Ways infinitely above our Ways, and his Thoughts above our Thoughts, it becomes us to tremble with Silence, and to suspend our Sentence touching the final and everlasting Estate of such Men, till the great Day of the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God.

Neither yet is there any thing in what I have last said, to encourage wicked Men in their Sins and Impenitency. For when Men so dye, as the serious Thoughts of the Symptoms and Circumstances of their Death are enough to make any Man tremble ; when their latter end is such as, to all outward appearance, gives just ground of strong Fears that they perish everlastingly, should not wicked Men themselves tremble to think of going out of the World in that manner ? Should they think they may safely venture to go on in their Sins to the last, because
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even those who tremble to think of their Death, and cannot but be possess'd with strong Fears that they are everlastingly miserable, dare not peremptorily say they are damned? If any be so profligately wicked as to be hence imboldened to go on still in their Sins, they do it to their utmost peril, and a most desperate hazard 'tis that they run: for if there be any Persons in the World whose everlasting Damnation may be strongly feared, then these presumptuous Sinners are they. For who in all Reason may we fear shall be denied Mercy at last, rather than such as all their Days despised Mercy, and yet in the mean time encouraged themselves in an ungodly course in the Hopes of that Mercy, the Offers whereof they from Day to Day contemned. What God may do, or may not do, for some such forlorn Creatures, we may not take upon us to determine peremptorily; but this we may safely say, that if any such be saved, it must be even a Miracle of Mercy that must save them.

And thus having shewed how *Charity* hopeth all things, that may rationally
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be hoped concerning Mens Spiritual and Everlasting Estate. I now come to make some brief Application of what hath been spoken. And from what hath been said concerning this Property of Charity, we may yet further be convinced of our great defects in Charity, and see still more cause to be humbled that we have attained so little of this excellent Grace which the Apostle prefers not only before all Gifts, even those Gifts which are most highly valued and admired, such as are the gift of Tongues and of Propheſie, and of working Miracles, but before the most excellent Graces of Faith and Hope, as we shall afterwards ſee.

Do we find that Charity disposeth us to hope all things that may rationally be hoped concerning the present Spiritual Estate of Men? Or rather are we not prone to be rash, precipitant, and uncharitable in passing sentence on them upon very weak and slender grounds? How ready are we from the meer weaknesses and infirmities of Men to conclude there is no True Grace in them? And this also though perhaps we have greater infirmities our selves, but that we see them not, or are more favourable to

our selves than to be willing to take notice of them. How apt are we to infer there can be no True Grace where there is but little Knowledge, and to cast Men out of the Communion of Saints in our rash censures, because they come not up to those measures which we judge our selves to have attained? So again, how prone are we to straiten and narrow Religion, and almost to confine all power of Godliness to those of our own judgment and practice? How hard a matter is it to find a Man confident, forward, and zealous in any particular way, and not to be possessed with hard thoughts against most of those who are of any other way, and uncharitable prejudices against Dissenters from him, either scarce allowing them any True Grace at all, or if any, yet much less Uprightness and Sincerity than those of his own way.

So in the next place, as to the future Spiritual Estate of Men, who see not or may not see in himself, how ready he is to conclude Men cast-a-ways and Reprobates, judicially incurably and irrecoverably hardened in Sin, because at present they go on obstinately and stubbornly in their Evil ways, and have long withstood

withstood the influences and efficacy of all means that have been made use of for reclaiming them? What more common in our Mouths, than that such or such a one is utterly irreclaimable, 'tis in vain to hope that one so hardened in Sin will ever be disengaged from his Sinful courses.

Neither are we more sparing and charitable in our censures with relation to the everlasting Estates of Men. We too much confine and straiten Salvation restraining the Kingdom of Glory to such and such alone as we our selves have in our thoughts admitted into the Kingdom of Grace here, excluding perhaps as many more as we have admitted and to whom our Charity ought to have been also extended. I have sometimes said in this place, and I now say it again, that I am fully perswaded that when we come to Heaven we shall see many Faces there which we never thought to have met in that place. I hope and rejoyce to think, that we shall meet in Heaven not only great numbers of those among our selves for whom we have little Charity here, but many Thousands of Poor Souls that live in Communion of the Roman Church, and

many Millions of the Greek and Abasine Churches, and other sorts of Christians scattered up and down in the World, whom we look upon as meer Nominal Christians, who have only the profession, but nothing of the power of Christianity. Wherefore let us enlarge and widen our Charity as far as upon any Scriptural Warrant, and Rational grounds we can, remembring what the Apostle here saith, *Charity believeth all things, hopeth all things.*

Now follows the last Property of Charity; it *endureth all things*. If we should understand this of bearing Injuries quietly and patiently, without being provoked to Passion, or stirred up to seek Revenge, then it would be a hard matter to put a difference between this Property, and those other Properties before mentioned, that it *suffereth long*, ver. 4. and *is not easily provoked*, ver. 5. And if we should understand it of bearing the sinful weakneses and infirmities of Men, or of being willing to take any pains, and undergo any labour or hardship in furthering and procuring their Temporal good, then it would not be easie to distinguish it from the Property

Property first mentioned in this verse, that it *beareth all things*. And perhaps, as I premised when I first entred upon handling these Properties of Charity, it may not be very necessary that we should be precise and accurate in assigning the limits and boundaries of them all, and putting an exact difference between them. 'Tis not very certain that the Apostle ever intended such an accurate distinction between them all. Why might he not as has been said before, the more fully and plainly to set forth the Nature of Charity, make use of variety of expressions much to the same purpose? We know as in all other Authors, so in Holy Scriptures nothing is more usual than to represent the same thing under various forms of expression, and to heap up many words of the same import and signification, or at least of so near alliance and affinity with one another, as 'tis a difficult matter to assign the exact or precise difference between them. But however I shall endeavour so to treat of this Property, as not altogether to confound it with any of those before mentioned. The Greek word, *ὑπομένω*, signifies to expect as well as to bear, and may import a bearing

with expectation, and so it may very fitly be taken in this place. For the Apostle immediately subjoins it to hoping all things; *Charity hopeth all things, endureth all things.* So that it may here note a suffering or bearing all things in order to, and in expectation of the Reformation and Amendment of those that are bad. How bad soever they are for the present, Charity hopes they may be better, and thereupon is willing to bear and endure all things in expectation of better things from them. I shall endeavour to illustrate this, by instancing in some particulars, but very briefly.

1. Charity patiently endures and bears long delays of Reformation in those whose Spiritual Good she desires, and unto whom she wisheth well. She is not easily tired out, or beaten off from the use of means, though no Good appear to have been done. Though she hath waited long, and taken much pains in vain, to reclaim an obstinate Sinner, and reduce him that hath gone astray, yet she is still contented to wait longer, and to be at the expence of more pains, in expectation that her endeavours may at length be successful, and attain their end.

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2. Charity endures and patiently bears many frustrations of hope, and disappointments of expectation. Many hopeful offers at Reformation there have been, many good beginnings have given encouragement to expect better things than those that anon followed. The Persons whose return from their evil ways was desired, have sometimes taken some steps backward, as if they were now bending their Course homewards, and making towards God whom they had forsaken. But suddenly by their relapses into Sin, they have given check to those good hopes, and damped the expectations of their amendment that had been raised. Thus their Friends and Well-wishers might sadly complain with the Psalmist, *Psal. 102. 10.* That God hath lifted them up and cast them down. *Solomon* saith, *Hope deferred maketh the Heart Sick*, *Prov. 13. 12.* And Oh how Sick doth it make it, when our hopes are then on a sudden deferred and set back when we thought we had been within reach of our Mercies, and that the accomplishment of our desires had been close at hand ! Yet these unwelcome and grievous frustrations of hope Charity endures ; and though she

be for the present a little unhinged and disheartened, yet on she goes, and still she persues her design. Though her hopes seem to be totally routed and defeated, yet she hath still some expectations that they will allay and recruit again.

3. Charity endureth the risings and tumultuatings of corruptions, and the breaking out of them so much the more because means have been applied for curbing and restraining them. So 'tis often observed, that when we attempt to heal Men then the Malignity and Obstinacy of their Disease most discovers it self. We knew them to be Sick before, but we never thought they had been half so bad till we went about to Cure them. If you reprove them, or make application of any other means to reclaim them, instead of that good effect of your endeavours which you desired and expected, you find them to be so much the worse, and the very Remedy doth but exasperate & heighten the Disease. Now their corruption ferments and works; now it riseth up and runs over, now they are ready to fly in your Face; now in despite of opposition, they take Head the more insolently,
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and run on the more freely and uncontrollably into all excess of Riot. This may seem to be enough to discourage all further endeavours of their Reformation: but yet Charity endureth all this, and will not be thus put off. All this though grievous to be born, Charity can overlook and pass by, and with unwearied Diligence, and invincible Patience still perseveres in her enterprize. She reclaiming of the parties though most obstinately resolute against being reclaimed, is that which she aims at, and for accomplishment whereof she is willing to endure all this and a great deal more.

4. Charity endureth all the misconstructions and misinterpretations that are made of those her actions in which the greatest Good of the Persons concerned in them, was endeavoured, and the most real demonstrations were made of Hearty and Sincere Love unto them. There is no such Love as that which a Man bears to another Mans Soul, no other Love is comparable to this. And there can be no better, or more real demonstration of this Love, than by seeking what in you lies, to further and procure the Spiritual Good and Salvation

tion of his Soul. What greater work of True Charity is there, or can there be, than to save a Soul from Death, and hide a multitude of Sins. And this he endeavours, who seeks to *convert a Sinner from the error of his way*, Jam. 5. 20. But yet this Charitable Work, this Labour of Love is not always rightly understood, and well taken. He meets with good measure in this malignant World, and may count himself favourably treated, who is not sometimes reviled and persecuted for his Love this way ; if he be not, he is more kindly dealt with than either the Prophets or Apostles, or than Christ himself. But that his Love should be mistaken, and his most sincere and affectionate endeavours in order to the Welfare of his Neighbours Soul, and his Eternal Happiness in another World, should be subject to misconstructions, and ill resented by him who had most reason to be thankful ; this is that which every Man must make account of and expect more or less, that shall be engaged in such an unacceptable Service. Your Relation, Friend, or Neighbour that is fast asleep in his Sin, does not care to be awakened ; if you meddle with
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with him, you are troublesome and pragmatikal ; you pretend Love to his Soul, but you Hate him, and therefore you set your self against him. You have base and unworthy ends in what you do ; you carry a hallow and Hypocritical Heart under your fair shews and pretences of Love and Good-will. 'Tis not Charity but the Pride of your Heart that makes you so forward to find fault with, rebuke, controul, and take upon you to reform others. When these and other such like constructions shall be made of your untained desires and hearty endeavours to gain his Soul, how grievous and afflicting a thing is it ! But Charity *endureth* all these things, and makes light of them. What cares she how she be censured, or what sinister constructions be made of her actions in the mean time, so she may win a Soul at last ? And this she is not altogether hopeless of attaining, notwithstanding these discouragements. Such malignant constructions are indeed very unkind requitals, where returns of Love and Gratitude might rather have been expected ; but Charity knows how to digest them, and still to go on in her Duty, rendring Good for Evil, in hopes
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that she may at length overcome Evil with Good.

5. Charity endureth and patiently beareth many breaches of promise, and violations of the highest and most serious Inanagements. The Person to be reclaimed hath made many and many promises that what hath been amiss should be amended ; but he hath still so falsified his word, and broken all the bonds that he hath taken upon him, and bound himself with so often, that little can be attributed to any promises which he may hereafter make. Give good words he may, he knows how to do that ; nothing is more easie, than to promise all things, and perform nothing : He seems by long custom to have acquired a confirmed Habit of Dissimulation and Falshood ; he seems to be little better than him concerning whom *Solomon* gives that caution, Prov. 26. 25. *When he speaketh Fair believe him not, for there are Seven Abominations in his Heart.* Well as False and Treacherous as he is, and as little to be trusted, Charity beareth all these things, and is willing to hope that he that hath broken his promise so often, may sometime or other be as good as his word. If he were

were so professedly resolved upon a course of Impenitency as that he would not as much as promise to be a new Man, she would have less hopes of him ; but as long as he continues to renew his promises, she hopes he hath a mind to be better, and imputing it to his weakness, fickleness, and instability that he is still worse than his word, she hopes that God may in his own time be pleased to take pity of him, and bestow upon him that strengthening and establishing Grace whereby he may be enabled to perform and make good all his engagements. In expectation hereof she still perseveres to call upon him for Reformation, and accepts of his promises as often as he makes them, hoping still that his last promise may be better kept than any of the former, and that his real and effectual performance thereof may make amends for all former breaches of promise.

6. Though over and above all this, a Man often apprehends that God also frowns upon him, and that by those many discouragements which he seems to cast in his way, he intimates that no good may be expected concerning such a Person ; though God seems to speak as
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once he did to the Prophet, *Jer. 7. 16.* Pray not for this Person, for I will not hear thee: or as to *Samuel* Praying and Mourning for *Saul*, *How long wilt thou Mourn for him, seeing I have rejected him?* *1 Sam. 16. 1.* How long wilt thou go on to Pray and use means for reclaiming such a one, seeing he is irreclaimable, seeing I have no purpose to hear thy Prayers, or give any Blessing to thine endeavours? Yet Charity endures all these seeming frowns and discouragements, and will still hope against hope, and go on still to wait on God in the use of means, though she meet with no better encouragement than the Woman of *Canaan* did at first, *Matth. 15. 23, 24, 25, 26.* Though she seem to be entertained with Chiding and Rebukes at first, yet she hopes she may however speed as that Woman did in the end. And thus I have endeavoured to shew how Charity in reference to the reclaiming of an impenitent Sinner, hopeth all things, endureth all things. I come now to make a little Application of what hath been spoken.

Use 1.

Use 1. And here first this may yet further convince us of our great deficiency in Charity. Do we observe these things in our selves? Do we find that our Charity, the strength of Love we have for the Souls of Men, and the ardency of our desires and longings after their Spiritual and Eternal Welfare, carry us on in the use of means for reclaiming them, against all discouragements, through all difficulties? Is our Charity such as endureth all things? As sticks at nothing, is disheartened and beaten back from its pursuit of its enterprize by none of those things that soon quench a little Love, and easily overcome soft and tender Spirits that are not inured to the hardships which much Love would make them willing and able to undergo? Alas! so weak is our Charity that every discouragement we meet with, is too strong for us, we are not able to bear up against it. If upon the first or second attempt the success answer not our expectations, we are presently ready to give over and lay all aside. Oh how quickly are we tired out, and how very little can our weak, feeble and languishing Charity endure! 'Tis true, for our near Relations, where
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Self-love, and Natural Affection interposeth, we may endure something ; by this side-wind we may be carried on to endeavour their Reformation against many difficulties ; but let us have to do with any other unto whom we are not so Related as that Self-Love and Natural Affection should fill our Sails, and we shall quickly feel the influence that small discouragements and little hardships have upon us, to make us out of Heart. If we judge of the measure of our Charity by the strength of our Affections towards our own, and our desires of their good, we shall much deceive our selves. What we take for pure Charity, may be a compound made up of a little Charity, and a great deal of Self-Love. True Charity is of a more diffusive Nature than to be confined to our selves, and those who are as our selves, our own.

Use 2. Let us then labour this way also to evidence the truth and measure of our Charity. Lets make it appear that we Love, not in word nor in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth, by expressing this Property of Charity where there is occasion. Lets not be weary of well-

well-doing ; let not difficulties discourage us, and tire us out. Let's really demonstrate that our Love is stronger than to be overcome by small things. Though your labour of Love in order to the reducing of a Sinner from the error of his way, may seem to be lost, and though the difficulty of gaining him appear to be much greater since means have been used than before ; and though after all your endeavours matters seem to grow worse rather than better, yet let not any of these things prevail with you to take you off and make you desist. Let discouragements and difficulties quicken your endeavours, and make you so much the more resolute to endure and bear whatsoever may encounter you in pursuance of the Service you are engaged in. And for your better encouragement herein, take these things into your consideration.

1. That how long soever your Friend, Relation, or Acquaintance hath obstinately persisted in his Sin, notwithstanding all endeavours to reclaim him, if God still give you a Heart to pray much for him, and Conscienciously to make use of all good means for disengaging him from his sinful courses, with un-
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wearied diligence and perseverance, 'tis very probable that God intends to answer your Prayers and crown your endeavours by the reclaiming of the Person in due time, though you may perhaps wait long for that Mercy. 'Tis not usual with God to draw out the Heart very much and long in Prayer, and to stir up endeavours much in the use of means with perseverance therein, unless where his secret purpose is to shew Mercy at last. If nothing should at last be done upon a Person for whom so many Prayers have been made, and so many endeavours used, it would be somewhat strange, and God would herein walk beside the ordinary track of his Providence. The Consideration hereof was that which encouraged *Monica*, *St. Augustines* Mother, still to go on and persevere in Prayer for him, tho' having long and earnestly sought God in his behalf, she could for the present see no fruit of her Prayers: She thought it almost impossible that a Son of so many Prayers and Tears should Finally and Eternally miscarry.

2. If God shall be pleased to do it at last, though after long waiting, and a great deal of pains taken, your Prayers
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and pains will be abundantly recompensed. For,

1. The longer, and the more obstinately the Sinner persevered in his impenitency, the more will both the power and freeness of Gods Grace be magnified in his Conversion. How Powerful and Victorious will that Grace appear, that shall have at length subdued the stubborn and stout Hearted Sinner that so long stood out against it! And how Free will that Grace appear which even the chief of Sinners, the most inveterate, obdurate, and incorrigible Sinner, is made partaker of, unto whom if unto any, Reason would have thought it should have been denied!

2. The circumstances of this great work whenever it shall please God to effect it, will in all probability be so much the more remarkable and signal, in return of so many Prayers and endeavours. God is not wont to answer many and long continued Prayers, and to give in the fruit of many labours, and long waitings in an ordinary way. After so much Prayer, Pains and waiting, they shall see more of Gods Providence in way of return; he will not only effect what he hath been so long

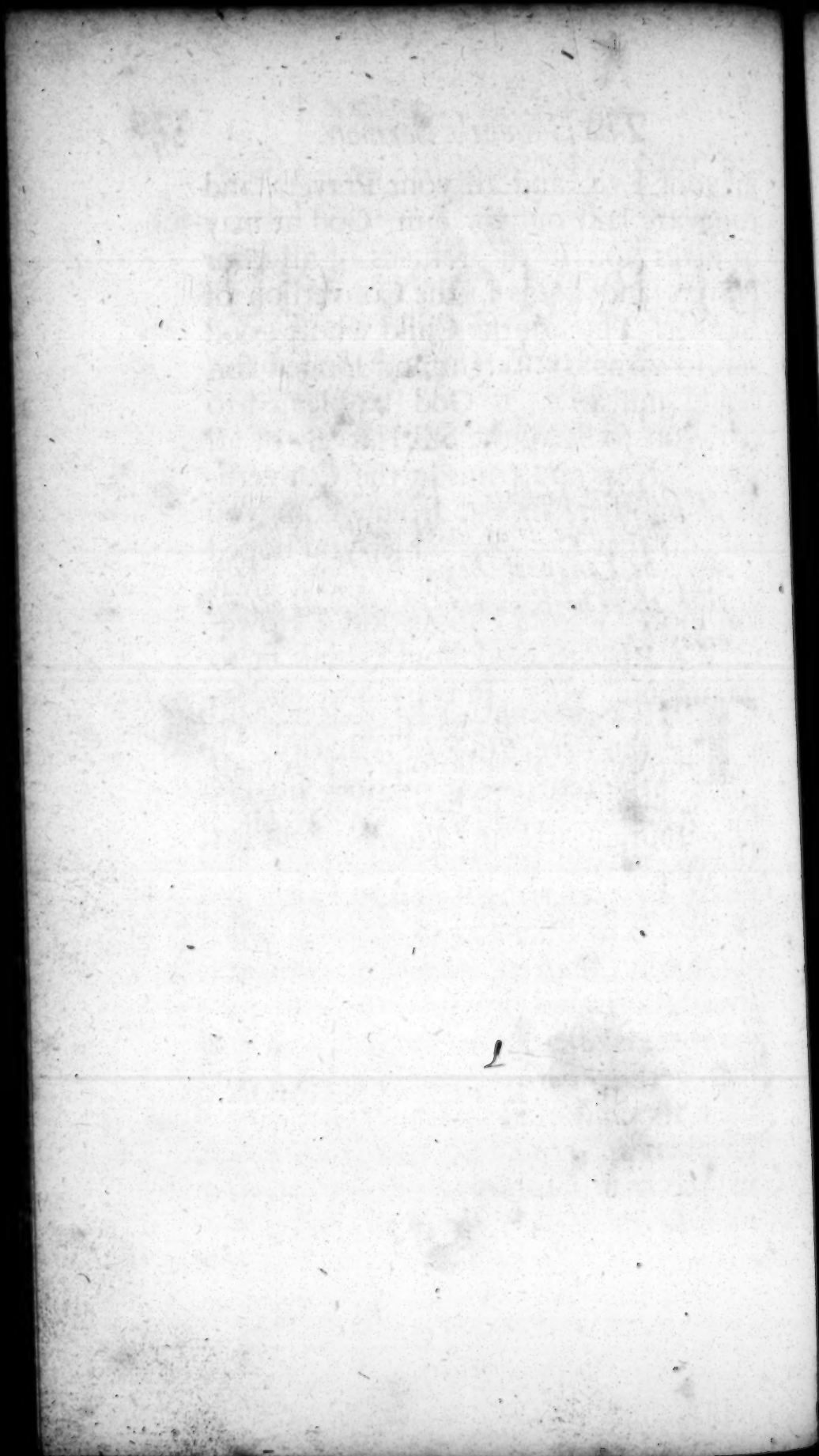
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fought unto and waited upon for, but make bare his Holy Arm to effect it, and do it with an Hand lifted up, and an Arm stretched out, so as all may see and acknowledge it, saying, This is the Lords doing, and it is marvellous in our Eyes.

3. Your Comfort will be so much the greater. O the overflowings of Comfort, and Extasies of Joy that will be, when the Prodigal Son comes home, when he that was Dead is Alive, and he that was lost is found : When the Profligate Sinner whose Conversion had been so long waited for, and so often even quite dispaired of is at length recovered out of the Devils Snare, and brought home unto God. We read in Scripture of Rejoycing *according to the Joy in Harvest*, Isa. 9. 3. That's a comparison by which great and unusual Joy is exprest. How great will your Joy be when you shall reap the Harvest of so many Prayers and endeavours.

But suppose what you uncessantly Pray and Labour, and wait for, should never be, (which yet is very unlikely) put the case the Sinner after all this should not be reclaimed, yet is not your Labour lost. While you have one Person

in your Eye, and all your Prayers and pains are laid out for him, God it may be gives you in the returns of all your Prayers and pains in the Conversion of another. Though the Child whose good you so earnestly fought and longed for, should miscarry, if God be pleased to give you to Reap the full Harvest of all your Prayers and pains in the Conversion of another, in and from whom you have all that Comfort which you hoped to have had in the other, and a great deal more, is your Labour lost? However if neither so God should think fit to recompense your Prayers and endeavours, yet he will be sure to return them into your own Bosom: You shall have Comfort here in having discharged your Duty, and an Eternal Reward hereafter.



SERMON VIII.

I COR. xiiij. 8.

Charity never faileth : But whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail : Whether there be Tongues, they shall cease : Whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away.

THUS at length I have done with the Properties of Charity. In the remainder of this Chapter the Apostle commends this excellent Grace, partly from its duration, and partly by preferring it before Faith and Hope. The duration of Charity is first absolutely asserted, and then comparatively illustrated in the 8th verse. Its duration is asserted in the first words of that verse, *Charity never faileth.* And then 'tis illustrated by comparing it with Prophecies, Tongues, and Knowledge, in the words following ; *But whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail ; whe-*
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ther there be Tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away. Now as for those words, *Charity never faileth*, they must be understood with Relation to the Life to come, for the Apostle therein shews the preheminnence of Charity, that whereas many excellent Gifts cease after this Life, as having neither place nor use in Heaven, Charity still remains, and shall to Eternity.

Now in handling this verse, I shall first shew, that Prophecies, Tongues and Knowledge, are of no longer duration than while we are here ; and then that Charity accompanies us into the other World, and abides for ever. I must speak of those three, Prophecies, Tongues and Knowledge, severally. And first of Prophecies. The word Prophecie in Scripture (as I have formerly shewed) is diversly taken ; sometimes it notes the Gift of foretelling of things to come, and sometimes the Gift of explaining and applying Scripture, or the Act of either of them. Now in which Sense soever it be here taken, whether it be taken for the prediction of things to come, or for explaining and applying Scripture, and speaking out of Scripture to the

Edification

Edification of the Hearers, it hath place no longer than while we are here in this World. If Propheſie be taken for the prediction of things to come, 'tis evident that it can have place no longer than while we are here. For,

1. Propheſie in this Senſe taken, neceſſarily implies ſuch a variety and mutability of diſpenſations, ſuch as acceſſion of Events, Alterations and Changes, as the condition of the Church and the World is ſubject to here; but in the other World where the Eſtate of all Men whether good or bad ſhall be everlaſtingly unchangeable, there will be no place for the prediction of future things.

2. The ends of this kind of Propheſie ſhall then ceaſe, and conſequently the thing it ſelf. The chief ends of the foretelling of things to come, are according to the different matter of ſuch Propheſies, either the warning, comforting, ſupporting, and encouraging of the Church of God, or the Terror and reſtraining, and ſometimes the humbling and Conversion of the Enemies thereof. Now 'tis apparent that none of theſe ends of Propheſie are conſiſtent with the Eſtate of good and bad Men in the other World.

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And if Propheſie be taken in the other Senſe for Explaining, Interpreting, and applying Scripture, 'tis as evident that it muſt ceaſe after this Life. For the Holy Scriptures themſelves, and all thoſe Ordinances which God hath appointed in his Church here, ſhall then be of no further uſe. The main end of the Word and Ordinances is, to convert and build up, comfort, guide, and lead us on in our way to Heaven: In a word, to make us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, and to fit us for the Eternal enjoyment of God in the World to come. But now all theſe ends ſhall ceaſe when we come to Heaven. Then there ſhall be none to be Converted, the Day of Grace being over and all belonging to the Election of Grace being already Converted: Then there will be none to be Edified or Built up, for all ſhall have attained unto Perfection; then there ſhall be no need of any other Comfort than that which perpetually flows from the immediate viſion and fruition of God, in whoſe preſence there is fullneſs of Joy, and at whoſe Right Hand there are pleaſures for evermore. Then we ſhall have attained, *the end of our Faith,*

Faith, the Salvation of our Souls, and therefore we shall have no need of any of those means which are in order thereunto. This Cessation of the use of means and ordinances when we come to Heaven the Apostle clearly implies, Eph. 4. 8, 10, 11, 12, 13. Where having spoken of Christs ascending up on high that he might give Gifts unto Men, and fill all things, he adds, that He hath appointed Officers in his Church, Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, and for the Edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the Statute of the fulness of Christ. Until we come to a perfect Man, so long and no longer shall these Church-Officers, Gospel-Ordinances, and Administrations continue. And this is that which Saint John intends, Rev. 21. 22. where setting forth the Vision which he had had of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the Representation thereof which had been made unto him, he saith, I saw no Temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it. There shall be no Temples, no Temple-Worship,

ship, or Church-Ordinances in Heaven; but the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb shall be instead of Temples, and all Ordinances. The presence, vision and enjoyment of God and of Christ shall make Temples, Church-Assemblies, and Ordinances useless. By these lower means God imparts to his People here so much of himself as he sees good: But there he will immediately reveal himself to them, and that in a fuller measure and more excellent manner. Hitherto of *Propheſie*: The Apostles next Instance is that of the Gift of Tongues; *Whether there be Tongues, they shall cease*. I shall not need to say much concerning this Instance; what I have said of the former may in good part be easily applyed to this also. By *Tongues* the Apostle usually understands the extraordinary or miraculous Gift of speaking strange Languages. This extraordinary Gift God bestowed on the Apostles and many others in the Primitive Times, chiefly for these two ends.

I. For confirming the Truth of the Gospel, which was also the end of those other Miracles which in those times God wrought by his Servants. And this especially

specially with Relation to Infidels and Unbelievers, who did not as yet give Credit to the Gospel. *Tongues*, saith the Apostle, *are for a Sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.* 1 Cor. 14. 22. To them chiefly, though they did also help to strengthen the Faith of those who had already assented to the Truth of the Gospel.

2. The Gift of Tongues served for enabling the Publishers of the Gospel to Preach to several Nations in their own Language, and their Mother-Tongue, which they understood, as we Read the Apostles did, *Acts* 2. 6, 7, 8. But if we should by Tongues understand that skill of understanding and speaking various Languages which is acquired by Industry, whether in way of Study or Converse, the end and use of this skill with Relation to the Church, is to enable Men to understand and interpret Scripture the better. Whether we by Tongues understand a Miraculous Gift, or an acquired Ability of understanding and speaking divers Languages, all the uses of these Gifts will cease when we come to Heaven; there will then be no place for confirming the Truth of the Gospel to Infidels, nor
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for strengthening the Faith of weak Believers : There will be no interpreting Scriptures, or publishing the Gospel to several Nations. The Church will be then fully gathered, and the Knowledge and Graces of Believers will be then perfected. To what purpose therefore should there be the Gift of Tongues then when there will no use thereof?

The Apostles last instance is in Knowledge. *Whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away.* 'Tis the Knowledge of Heavenly things which he intends. And the Knowledge of these things,

1. As here acquired, by Hearing, and Reading, and Studying the Word, and by attendance on Ordinances. The Knowledge that we shall have in Heaven shall not be attained in this way of means : we shall then be all taught of God by the immediate Irradiation and Illumination of his Spirit. And,

2. Whereas our Knowledge here is imperfect, this our imperfect Knowledge shall be abolished, and the perfect Knowledge of whatsoever it may concern us to know, and of whatsoever may tend to our Happiness shall come in the Room of it, as the Apostle afterwards speaks. So then there are two things
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in which our Knowledge hereafter shall differ from what we have here ; in the way of attaining it, and in the Perfection of it. And thus I have shewed that Prophecies, Tongues and Knowledge, that kind of acquired and imperfect Knowledge which we have here shall cease to be when we come to Heaven ; which was the first thing to be spoken to.

2. As for Charity, this never faileth. This Grace remains in Heaven, and shall be in us to Eternity ; and that in a more intense and eminent degree. This Grace shall not be abolished in Heaven, but perfected. We have here but a very little of this Grace, there we shall be full of it ; and this both with Relation to God and Man.

1. As for our Love unto God, this must needs be heightened and inflamed when we come to Heaven, and this upon divers accounts.

1. Because then God who is Love shall more eminently dwell in us, communicate himself to us, and fill us with his own fulness. He who is Love it self, shall then take full possession of our Souls, and plentifully shed abroad this excellent Grace of Love in our Hearts.

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2. We shall then better understand what reason we have to love God. For,

1. We shall know him better, and more clearly discern how transcendently Amiable and Lovely he is in himself. We shall have a clear view and full prospect of all those glorious excellencies and perfections in him that may kindle and attract Love;

2. Then we shall more fully apprehend how unspeakably Good and Gracious he hath been to us. Now we have scant and narrow apprehensions of his Love; then we shall in some measure comprehend with all Saints what is the height, and depth, and breadth and length of his Love to us in Christ, which passeth Knowledge. This our future Knowledge of him both as to what he is in himself, and what he is to us, will raise our Love to him incomparably beyond any degree of Love that is attainable in this Life.

2. Our Love to Man, to the Saints of God, our Fellow-Citizens, shall then be such as no Saint of God ever attained on this side Heaven.

For 1. Then they shall be every way truly Amiable and Lovely. Then they shall be freed from all those sinful weaknesses

nesses and imperfections, those spots and blemishes, those unpleasing Corruptions and Distempers, those cross Humours and contrary Dispositions, which here do much abate and weaken our Love to them. There they shall be filled with whatsoever is Beautiful, Lovely and Desirable. And who can choose but Love such an object dearly!

2. We our selves shall also then be perfectly free'd from all those corrupt Affections and Distempers that are contrary to Love. Then Pride and Envy, and Self-Love, and whatsoever is destructive of Charity, or unfriendly to it, shall no more have place in us. Then whatever is an Enemy to Charity, or any way a back-Friend or underminer of it, shall not only be mortified in us, but plucked up by the Roots, and utterly destroyed. Then there shall be nothing in us to give check to our Love, to retard its motions, or hinder the free course and actings thereof.

3. Then all the Saints shall know in all their Hearts and Souls that they are most sincerely, intirely, and dearly beloved of all. We shall know that all others Love us with the most endeared and affectionate Love, and they shall all know

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that we Love them no less. Now what ardent Affections, what flames of mutual Love must this kindle in us all to each other, and to what an height must it blow up those flames. We know by experience, that there is nothing that is a more powerful incentive to Love than the certain Knowledge and perswasion that we have of the intire Love that others have for us.

4. There is yet one thing more that contributes not a little towards the increasing and heightning of our Love to one another in Heaven; and that is the assurance that we have that there shall never be any end or abatement of our Mutual Love. He that hath no security but that the Person who is now his Friend may hereafter become his Enemy, will sometimes be too apt to think of his Counsel who said, so Love thy Friend as making account that thou mayest sometime hereafter see reason to Hate him; he may so carry himself as to forfeit thy Love. Such a thought as this, and much more any suspicion of it, cannot but sprinkle some drops of cold Water upon the flames of Love, to slack the heat of them. But he who certainly knows that he who Loves him dearly at present

present will never cease to do it, hath the highest ingagement to the same Dearness and Constancy of Affection, and the strongest allecitive thereunto. This will be our case in Heaven. We shall then assuredly know that all those Saints who Love us most intirely, shall continue to do it everlastingly ; and O how powerful an influence will this have on us to endear them to us, and to call forth all our Love to meet and answer theirs !

Now that which hath been spoken concerning the duration of Charity, and therein its preheminance above Prophecies, Tongues, and Knowledge, may be improved and made useful to us many ways. I shall at present only mention two or three particulars.

Use 1. Are Prophecies, and Tongues, and Knowledge to fail, cease, and vanish away, as being of no further use after this Life is ended ? And will Charity then be in its height and perfection ? and shall it so continue for ever ? Then how unequal and preposterous is our Rating and Valuation of things. As for Knowledge and Gifts, especially Gifts that are of an extraordinary nature, as the Gift of Prophecie and

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Tongues,

Tongues, how highly do we prize them! And how do we undervalue and despise Charity in comparison of them! Love is in our esteem a poor, cheap and contemptible thing if compared with Knowledge, and Eloquence, and skill in variety of Languages, and other such like endowments of the Mind; whereas in Truth one dram of Charity is more worth than the Richest Furniture, and most admired Accomplishments of all other Gifts that ever Mortal Creature was adorned with. And if there were no other Argument to prove it, yet this were sufficient, that Charity accompanieth us into the other World when all those Gifts shall vanish, and be of no further use to us; yea and shall then be the principal flower of that Crown of Glory which shall be the Everlasting Reward of every sound Christian.

Use 2. If Prophecies, and Tongues, and Knowledge shall vanish when we come to Heaven, how transcendently Blessed, and unspeakably Glorious will our condition then be, when all those things shall be of no further use to us, which here are so necessary, and by which God communicates and imparts
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to us whatever discovery or enjoyment of him we have! Here all comes in to us in the way of Ordinances, and then we shall have no need of them, we shall be above them.

Use 3. Let us therefore be perswaded as to set an higher Price upon Charity, so to lay out more of our pains in the pursuit of it. The latter we shall never do unless we do the former; unless we prize it we shall never take pains to get it. For the former of these, namely, the value thereof, besides the durableness of Charity, there are these things that set forth the worth of it, and commend it to us.

1. There is nothing that renders us more like unto God than Charity doth. Every one that Loveth is born of God, ^{1 Joh. 4.} and therein bares the lively Image of ^{7.} him whose Child he is.

2. There is nothing that brings us nearer unto God, and fits us for more close and intimate Communion with God. God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God ^{1 Joh. 4.} ^{16.} in him.

3. 'Tis the great Commandment of Christ that we should Love one another ; the Commandment which he principally insisted on, which he most urged and inculcated when he was about to leave this World as to his Bodily presence. *A new Commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another,* John 13. 34. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you,* John 15. 12. *These things I Command you, that ye love one another,* John 15. 17. This Commandment of Christ St. John urgeth ; *This is the Message, of the Commandment which ye heard from the Beginning, that we should love one another,* 1 John 3. 11. This is his Commandment, *that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us Commandment,* 1 John 3. 23. This Commandment of Love St. James calls by way of eminency, *the Royal Law,* Jam. 2. 8.

4. Love is the Sum and Abridgment of the Law. *He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law,* Rom. 13. 8. *The whole Law is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self,* ver. 9.

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All these things shew the excellency of this Grace : and he that is fully perswaded thereof, will be willing to be at the expence of some pains to get it. And the means for attaining it are,

1. Earnest Prayer unto God that he would be pleased to infuse it into our Hearts. But then this must not be done by fits and starts, but we must make it our constant and most importunate suit unto him, who certainly will not deny us that which he hath so frequently and earnestly enjoined on us, and recommended to us.

2. To be much in the acts and exercise of Love, taking all occasions of doing Offices of Love to any that need them, and performing them out of Love. The frequent exercise of any Grace or Habit whether Moral or Intellectual, will increase and strengthen it. But then, as was said, those Offices of Love must be performed out of Love. Herein we may easily deceive our selves if we be not very heedful, We may do many good Offices to our Neighbour from other Principles and Motives rather than from Love. When we do the very same things which Love requires, and which Charity should prompt

us to, we may be acted from Pride, Vain-glory, a desire to please others, who will like it well; or because we think such Offices are expected from us, and we shall be thought wanting to our Duty if we neglect them; or purely from the convictions of our Consciences which put us on, and will not suffer us to be quiet unless we do them. Wherefore this is a great thing, and indeed, all in all, that we see, that in all our Offices of Love, True Love be at the bottom.

3. Observe your Heart narrowly, take notice of all inward motions, workings of Corruption, and Distempers contrary to Love, and suppress them. As soon as you discern them, strive against them, and pray them down.

So much of the 8th Verse. Now in the 9th and 10th Verses the Apostle confirms what he had said, concerning Knowledge and Prophecie. Prophecie must fail, and Knowledge must vanish away. For (saith he) *we know in part, and we Prophecie in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.* In which words we have these two things,

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1. The imperfection of our Knowledge here : *We know in part, and we Propheſie in part.*

2. The Ceſſation or Abolition of our imperfect Knowledge when we ſhall attain to Perfection ; but *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.* Of both theſe in order. A little more largely of the former ; but very briefly of the latter. Concerning the former of theſe, the imperfection of our Knowledge here, the Apoſtles aſſertion is full and plain. We know in part, and we Propheſie in part. *We know in part ;* that is, we have in this Life only a partial and defective Knowledge of Heavenly things ; ſome things we know, and many other things we are ignorant of. And ſo alſo *we Propheſie in part ;* for how ſhould it be otherwiſe if we know but in part ? 'Tis not poſſible that we ſhould declare and make known to others more than we know our ſelves. Neither is this to be underſtood only of weak Chriſtians, or of ſuch as are of the lower Forms in the School of Chriſt, but even of thoſe whoſe attainments are higheſt, of the moſt enlightned and moſt knowing Chriſtians. The Apoſtle, although he
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2 Cor. 12
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had been in the third Heaven, and was in danger of being puffed up, and exalted above measure through the abundance of Revelations, excludes not himself; we know in part, saith he, and we Prophesie in part; even we who have had the greatest advantages above others. So that all the Apostles extraordinary Revelations left him still in a state of imperfection. Notwithstanding all his eminent Gifts and Attainments above the generality of Christians, he still knew but in part, and Prophesied but in part. In handling this Subject, I shall endeavour to shew,

1. In what respects we know here only in part.

2. Whence 'tis that we know but in part.

3. Make some Application. For the First of these, our Knowledge is only in part in sundry respects.

1. 'Tis but a part only of what we shall know hereafter, that is revealed to us here. The things which God hath prepared for them that Love him are such as we shall never fully understand until we come to enjoy them. *Now we are the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be,* saith the Apostle,
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1 *John* 3. 2. How Glorious and unspeakably Happy we shall be in the World to come, God hath not thought fit to discover to us fully in this Life. Some glimpses of Heaven he lets us have, by which we may darkly guess at the Glory and Blessedness of our future Estate, but a clear view and distinct Knowledge of it he hath not thought fit to afford us here. *Our Life is hid with Christ in God*, *Coloss.* 3. 3. Which tho' it be in some Sense true of the Life of Grace here, yet is it chiefly to be understood of the Life of Glory, and therefore the Apostle presently adds, *When Christ who is our Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.* Something of those unseen things of the other World was imparted to *St. Paul* when he was caught up into the third Heaven; he heard unspeakable words; words by which strange and wonderful things were discovered; but the discovery of them was only for himself; divers of them were such things as it was not lawful for him to utter, and make discovery of to any other.

2. Much of what is revealed, is not easily understood. Much of the Holy Scriptures the most inquisitive, the most
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Wise, the most Knowing, and most Holy Men could never by all their search and Prayers attain to understand. In many places they are enforced to acknowledge their ignorance, and in many more they can only make some conjectures and guesses at the meaning, but dare not affirm this or that to be the true Sense, and none other. Besides how many depths are there in Divinity, that no Man can fathom ! How many knots that no Man can untie ! How often are the Persons that are of greatest Abilities, of the soundest Judgment, and most piercing understanding puzzled !

3. We understand but in part even what we do in some measure understand. We have but dark and confused apprehensions of many of the things which we know ; and our weak and imperfect Knowledge is mixed with many mistakes and errors.

4. If we know the things because they are so often and so clearly revealed in Holy Scripture, that no question can be made of them, yet concerning the manner how those very things are, we are wholly ignorant : Instances hereof may be the Doctrine of the Trinity, the Do-
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Doctrine of the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in the Person of Christ, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the like; these things and such like, being clearly revealed in Scripture we know to be so as they are revealed, but as to the manner how they are, we are in the dark.

5. Though we know many things in themselves with a good measure of clearness and certainty, yet our inferences and deductions from them are subject to much uncertainty. For here we make use of our Reason to collect and gather one thing from another. And nothing is more easie than to think we have rightly inferred and concluded that which doth not follow upon those premises which we have in Scripture. Our Reason is much weakened and darkened by the fall; and therefore though Truths be plainly laid down and given us in Scripture, yet many of our deductions from them being remote and at a good distance, it often falls out that there is some mistake or other in our way of Arguing and Inferring one thing from another. So easie is it to Argue amiss, and from true premises to draw false conclusions, that nothing is more ordinary than

than that from one and the same Truth divers Persons should draw opposite conclusions.

So I pass on to the second thing, namely, to shew whence it is that our Knowledge here is but in part. Some of the Reasons hereof respect God, some our selves, and some respect the objects or things to be known. The Reasons hereof with reference to God are.

1. Because it hath seemed good to the Wisdom of God not to reveal all things alike clearly. Some things are so plain to every understanding as none can choose but apprehend them, unless they wilfully shut their Eyes; other things again are more obscurely and darkly revealed, the clearer Revelation of them being reserved for hereafter. This every Man observes and acknowledgeth who hath any acquaintance with the Scriptures. What St. Peter saith of the Epistles of St. Paul, 2 Pet. 3. 16. *That in them there are some things hard to be understood*, the same may be said of many other parts of the Holy Scriptures.

2. Whereas it is by the Teachings and Illumination of the Holy Spirit that we attain to the right understanding of Spiritual things, it seemeth good to the
Wisdom

Wisdom of God to give his Spirit unto Men in different measures. Some have greater assistances from the Spirit, and higher Illumination than others; *For God divides to every Man severally as he pleaseth*, 1 Cor. 12. 11. And yet on none is the Spirit bestowed in that fulness here as hereafter.

Then with reference to our selves there are these Reasons why we know but in part here.

1. Our Understandings are Naturally weak and shallow, and our Minds full of darkness in Spiritual things. *The Natural Man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God, because they are Spiritually discerned.* 1 Cor. 2. 14.

2. Besides this our darkness and weakness, we have in us a Natural Enmity against Spiritual Truths. We slight them and despise them; we count them foolishness, as the Apostle speaks in the place last mentioned, and our Hearts rise against them, and we hate them, *John* 3. 20.

Lastly, The imperfection of our Knowledge here, ariseth partly from the sublimity of the Truth revealed, and partly from the contrariety of them to our corrupt Affections.

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1. Many of those Truths which are contained in Scripture are sublime High and Misterious; the whole Doctrine of the Gospel is called *the Mystery of Godliness*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. And the Apostle, Eph. 6. 19. speaking of his Preaching Christ, calls it, his making known *the Mystery of the Gospel*; and the Dispensers of the Truths of the Gospel are called *Stewards of the Misteries of God*, 1 Cor. 4. 1. Now 'tis not strange that these profound Misteries should be known by us only in part while we are here, especially considering the weakness and shallowness of our Capacities.

2. Many Truths are contrary to our corrupt Affections; they curb our Lusts, and restrain our Sinful exorbitances, and therefore we cannot or will not receive them. Men's Lusts bribe their Judgments, and cast a mist before their understandings; and by this means much of the Truth is not entertained. Wicked Men that are Slaves to their Lusts, Love Darknes rather than Light, because their Deeds are Evil, John 3. 19. But when we come to Heaven our Understandings shall be cleared, our intellectual Faculty strengthened and enlarged; our Lusts and corrupt Affections shall

shall be perfectly destroyed and done away ; and all those Fogs and Mists with which they Cloud our Minds, be scattered and removed ; and there shall be nothing to hinder us from understanding fully and clearly, certainly and unerringly, whatsoever shall contribute to our Felicity. Now to apply what hath been spoken touching the imperfection of our Knowledge.

Use i. Do we know but in part while we are here ? Let no Man then please himself too much in respect of his Parts or Abilities whether Natural or Acquired. Let no Mans Knowledge puff him up, and make him undervalue and despise others. This Proud Conceit and Fond Opinion of a Man's own attainments and accomplishments is an infallible sign of a Mans shameful Ignorance of himself : Whatever else he is acquainted with, he is certainly a great Stranger at Home, and hath very little Acquaintance with himself, who doth not discern so much weakness and darkness in himself, and so much imperfection in his Knowledge, as is more just matter of Shame and Humiliation to him than of Pride. It much better becomes

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such weak and dark Creatures as we are to think soberly of our selves, and to be ashamed and abased for our manifold Ignorance, than to be lifted up in regard of any little and imperfect Knowledge we have attained. And this is a most certain Truth, that the more a Man grows in sound Knowledge, the better he will discern his own Ignorance. No Man discovers more defects in his Knowledge than he that knows most.

Use 2. Do we know but in part while we are here? Then let no Man be unwilling to acknowledge his Ignorance, as at any time there may be just cause for it. There are those who would be thought to be ignorant of nothing; at least who will not own their ignorance where 'tis most palpable. They forwardly and boldly take upon them to dictate to others the things which they themselves never understood; and though there be the clearest evidence of their errors and mistakes, yet they stiffly persist in the justification of them. What height of Pride is this, that such imperfect, frail, and dark Creatures as we are, who are ignorant of many more things than we know, should arrogate

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to our selves such a Perfection of Knowledge! What are any of us that we should not most willingly and readily acknowledge our defects?

Use 3. It may also caution us to beware of ascribing too much unto any Mans Judgment. They who know but in part are not to be relyed on as infallible. This is a thing which we will easily grant ought not to be done; and yet we cannot but observe how apt we are to attribute more than is meet, and then with safety we may, to those whose Persons we have in Admiration. If we have an high esteem for any Mans Abilities, we think we cannot err as long as we are of his Mind, and could even venture to follow him blind-fold.

And yet on the other hand we must take heed of the contrary extream. We must take heed that we lean not so much to our own understanding, as to slight the Judgment of others, and so through our self-admiration to render our selves incapable of receiving benefit from those Gifts which God hath bestowed on them for the Edification of his Church, and the help of their Brethren. Humility and Teachableness are

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Qualifications very fuitable to those who know but in part, and must profess themselves Learners as long as they are on this side Heaven.

Use 4. The imperfection of our Knowledge here, should make us long after that Estate of Perfection which we shall arrive at when we come to Heaven. Here a very considerable part of our Knowledge is to see our weakness and deficiency in Knowledge, and to understand our own Ignorance; there all the defects of our Knowledge shall be done away, and we shall be Ignorant of nothing that we are bound to know, or the knowledge whereof may do us any good. Here *He that increaseth Knowledge increaseth Sorrow*, as Solomon speaks *Eccles. i. 18.* The more he knows the more cause he sees of bewailing his Ignorance, and the more thorough Acquaintance he hath with his Frailty, Sin, and Misery; the more he knows, the more difficulties he meets with that he cannot overcome, the more knots that he cannot untie; the more he knows, the more eager and unsatisfied his Thirst after Knowledge is, the more restlessly he pursues it to the spending of his

his Spirits, the impairing of his Health, the wasting of his Strength, and it may to the shortning of his Life. In these and divers other respects, he that increaseth Knowledge increaseth Sorrow, and when all is done 'tis but a very slender measure of Knowledge that he attains. But in Heaven our Knowledge shall cost us no pains, shall be mixed with no darkness or dissatisfaction, shall be imbittered with no Sorrow attending it: Our Knowledge then shall be most clear, satisfactory, perfect, delightful, sweet, and comfortable when here we have tired our selves out in the quest of Knowledge to small purpose, when we have laboured for nought, and spent our strength in vain, when we find our selves more unsatisfied after all our enquiries after Truth than we were before, when the further we search into a thing, the more inextricable perplexities, and invincible difficulties we find our selves intangled in; when we find that the only thing we have gained by searching after that which perplexed us, is, that we now despair of understanding it; when the issue and fruit of all our pains is nothing else but the rendring of our disappointment so much the more grievous

to us ; then let us relieve our selves against our troubles with the thoughts of that Joyful Day, when all our darkness, ignorance, dissatisfactions, doubts, and perplexities shall vanish in a moment ; and when Light without any mixture of darkness, Perfection of Knowledge without any defects, clear and full satisfaction without the least remainder of scruple, shall take possession of our Souls : And when no Sorrow, or Anxiety, or Trouble shall imbitter our Knowledge ; when perfect Knowledge and perfect Joy shall meet together, and Kiss each other in the Soul. O Solace your Soul in the lively hopes and joyful expectations of Arriving at that Land of Light, where the Sun shall never any more set upon your Soul, where Light, and Life and Joy shall be the Portion of it to Eternity.

And so much concerning the imperfection of our Knowledge here, in those words, *we know in part, and we Prophecie in part.*

Now follows the Cessation or Abolition of our imperfect Knowledge when in Heaven we shall attain to perfection, in the 10th Verse. But *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part*

part shall be done away. Of this I have spoken something already, neither can I add much more. That those words, *when that which is perfect is come*, relate to the state of Glory when all our imperfections shall be done away, cannot be questioned ; for the Apostle all along compares our Estate here with that hereafter.

But then how that which is in part shall be done away when that which is perfect is come, is not very easie to be understood. St. *Chrysostome*, and after him *Theophylact* understand it only of the doing away of the imperfection of our Knowledge ; as if the meaning were, that the Knowledge which we here attain, should still remain the same in Heaven, excepting only the imperfections and defects of it, which are to be taken away. But against this interpretation two things may be objected.

The First is, that the Apostles words seem to imply more than the removing of the imperfections of our Knowledge. The word *καταργησιαν*, which he twice useth speaking of this matter ; namely, in the 9th Verse, where he saith, *Whether there be Knowledge it shall vanish away*, and here again, *that which is in*

Part shall be done away ; properly signifies the ceasing and utter abolishing of any thing, and so accordingly 'tis here rendred by words that import no less, to wit, by vanishing away in the 8th Verse, and by being done away in the Tenth. Now it seems very harsh to say that vanisheth away and is abolished, which is perfected, and so its imperfection only vanisheth, but the thing it self remains, and is in a better condition than it was in before.

2. Another thing which may be objected against this interpretation, is, that which seems to have yet more weight in it than the former ; and 'tis that in this Sense Charity also may be said to vanish, or to be done away ; for the imperfection of it shall be removed. Wherein then is it that the Apostle prefers Charity as to its duration, before Knowledge ? 'Tis evident that the Apostle commends Charity, and prefers it before Knowledge for its duration, and because it still remains in Heaven when *Knowledge shall vanish away* : but if only the imperfection of Knowledge vanisheth the thing it self still remaining, how is it then as to its duration inferior to Charity, or wherein lyes the pre-
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heminnence of Charity above it? This Objection is of so much force, that 'tis very difficult to remove it; for this Sense of the words seems directly to contradict and overthrow the whole design of the Apostle, which is to shew that Charity remains when Knowledge shall vanish.

But you will say, if this be not the meaning of the Apostle that our Knowledge shall be perfected hereafter, and so cease to be only as to its defects and imperfections, what other interpretation may we pitch on that shall be consonant to Truth, and suitable to the Apostles design? This seems to be a very hard Question, and perhaps not to be fully answered till we come to Heaven. Then we shall know in what Sense our present Knowledge vanisheth away, and perhaps not till then. Wherefore not to take upon me with those whom the Apostle censures, *Colos. 2. 18.* to intrude into those things which I have not seen, or to speak absolutely and peremptorily in dark and doubtful matters, least I become like those bold and self-conceited Teachers, *1 Tim. 1. 7. who understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm,* I shall only propound another

ther interpretation to be considered of, leaving every Man to his own Judgment, to embrace it or respect it as he shall see cause. Whereas the Apostle saith, our Knowledge shall cease, he may perhaps by those words intend the Cessation of that kind of Knowledge which we have here, and that another kind of Knowledge shall come in place of it. Here we walk by Faith, there we shall walk by Sight, as the Apostle speaks 2 Cor. 5. 7. So here we know God by Faith, there we shall know him by Sight, for we shall *see him as he is*, 1 John. 3. 2. The difference of these two kinds of Knowledge may be somewhat illustrated by things that are more Familiar to us, and with which we are better acquainted. Suppose we that a Man who never had the use of his Taste should be informed concerning the sweetness of Honey, and the bitterness of Gall and Wormwood; suppose we that the Nature of the one and the other should be described and set forth to him as fully as any Words or Language could do it, yet could that Man never attain such a Knowledge of the sweetness of Honey or of the bitterness of Gall as he that had tasted of them both. Or to make
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use of an Illustration that comes ye somewhat nearer the matter, for the clearing whereof I make use of it. Let us suppose the most exact and accurate description of Colours were made to a Blind Man, (I mean to a Man Born Blind, as he in the Gospel, *John 9. 1.*) and that all the most excellent Philosophical Discourses of Colours were Read to him, and he had understood them all, so that he had attained the most compleat and perfect Knowledge of them that is in that way attainable; yet if this Mans Eyes should be opened, and his Sight given him, he would presently find that he had now another kind of Knowledge of Colours than ever he had before; let this be applyed to the business in Hand. We understand God and Heavenly things here by such rude descriptions and dark representations of them as we are at this distance, and in this Estate of imperfection capable of: but when we come to Heaven we shall see him Face to Face; and therefore we may well conclude that the Knowledge we have of him here doth as much differ from the Knowledge that we shall then have of him, as the Blind Mans Knowledge of Colours differs from the

the Knowledge of him that hath the use of his Eyes. So then perhaps this may be the meaning of the Apostle, that the very kind of Knowledge which we have here shall wholly vanish and be done away, and a more excellent kind of Knowledge shall succeed in the Room of it. However it be, certain it is that our Knowledge then shall have an excellency, clearness, satisfactoriness, and sweetness in it, far above any thing that we can here apprehend.

And O how should the thoughts of the Perfections of that Life Ravish our Hearts, and raise them above this World! What ardent desires and earnest longings after it should we be affected with? What pains should we take to be fitted for this Blessed Estate, purifying our selves as he whom we hope to see and enjoy is pure.

Obj. If after all our attendance on the means for attaining Knowledge, we know but in part, it may seem that the Scriptures are imperfect. If the Scriptures be perfect, how is our Knowledge imperfect?

Ans. 1. Many of the things that are contained in the Scriptures we understand not; and in that regard therefore,
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the imperfection of our Knowledge doth not argue the imperfection of the Scriptures. The Law of the Lord may be perfect in its self, and is so, *Psal.* 19. 7. though we understand it but imperfectly.

2. The perfection of the Holy Scriptures is to be estimated with reference to the end for which they were given ; as the perfection of any Instrument is to be judged of by its end or use. So the perfection of a Key or a Knife lyes in its fitness and sufficiency for those purposes and uses for the which it is made. Now the Scriptures are the great Instrument whereby God intended to instruct us, teach us, build us up, guide us, and lead us on till we come to Heaven. So then though they contain not all that which we shall know in Heaven, yet if they contain enough to bring us thither, they fully answer their end and use, and therefore are perfect.

Use. Let not this lessen or abate our esteem of the Holy Scriptures, that all the Knowledge attainable by them is short of what we shall have in Heaven, and that when we come thither we shall have no need of them.

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For while we are in the way to Heaven these means are necessary, and unless we make use of and steer our course by the Light which they hold forth to us, we must never look to come thither, and to arrive at that perfection of Knowledge which we shall there attain to. A Learned Man looks back upon some of the things that were taught him when he was a Boy, and which then he was much taken with, as low and inconsiderable matters, but yet they were necessary for those his tender Years, and without them he had never attained what now he is Honoured for.

Now to go on with the Text, the Apostle in the two Verses following gives a double Illustration of what he had spoken touching the imperfection of our Knowledge here in comparison of that which we shall attain hereafter. The former of these Illustrations we have in the 11th Verse, the latter in the 12th. In the 11th Verse he Illustrates it by resembling our Knowledge here to the Knowledge of a Child, and our Knowledge hereafter to that of a Man. *When I was a Child, I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child, I thought as a Child ; but when I became a Man I put*

away

away Childish things. His meaning is, that there is as much difference between our Knowledge here and hereafter, as there is between the Knowledge of a Child and a Man. Our Knowledge in this Life is like that of Children in divers respects.

1. They are but few things that Children know. Their Knowledge for the most part runs within the narrow compass of what relates to their Meat and Drink and Recreations, and the things which they every Day converse with. Such is our Knowledge here ; it reacheth but a little way, the things we know not being many more than the things that we know.

2. The things that Children understand, are known to them mostly by comparisons and similitudes shadowing them, but to them rudely and imperfectly as they are capable of them. And such is much of our Knowledge of Heavenly things. God is pleased to condescend to our weakness, representing Heavenly things to us by Earthly things ; and such things as we never saw nor can see while we are here, by those things which we see daily.

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3. To make Children understand and retain things, you must take a great deal of pains in opening them and explaining them to them several ways over and over, and in whetting and inculcating them on them. So for Heavenly things, we must hear them over and over, there must be precept upon precept, and line upon line, here a little, and there a little, we are narrow-mouthed Vessels that cannot take in much at once.

4. Children quickly lose what they have gotten, unless they be often reminded of it, and means be frequently used for preventing it. So it is with us in Spiritual things; what we have gained, slips away from us again, unless means be often used for recalling and recollecting what we know, and for renewing those Impressions which Truths have formerly made upon our Minds.

Use. Now seeing our condition here as to our Knowledge, is like that of Children, it were well if we could in some things imitate them. Our Saviour sometime propounded the example of little Children to his Disciples for their Imitation. *He called a little Child unto him, and set him in the midst of them;*

them, and said, verily I say unto you, except ye be Converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as a little Child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 18. 2, 3, 4. As to the thing that I have been speaking of.

1. Let us imitate Children in being inquisitive as they are, ever inquiring after this and that, (I mean Ingenious Children are) and putting so many Questions that you are weary of answering them. If we could do so in Spiritual things, if we had that esteem of Heavenly things, and that earnest thirsting after the Knowledge of them that did make us as inquisitive after them, we should soon come to be better acquainted with them than we are. But many of us are well pleased with our Ignorance, never inquiring after these matters, nor concerning our selves with them.

2. Children are of a teachable disposition; they are ready and willing to receive what is made known to them; they do not wrangle, or perversly contradict and oppose themselves against what is imparted to them. And the same

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disposition should there be in us in reference to Heavenly things. Whatsoever the Word of God clearly holds forth unto us, that we must *receive with all readiness of Mind*, as did the Bereans, Acts 17. 11. We must not Cavil, or contentiously dispute against plain Truths which are clearly revealed in Scripture, because we cannot fully comprehend them, or by our Reason fathom the depth of them, and resolve all knots and difficulties about them.

3. Children are easily reduced when they err, easily rectified when they are mistaken, and willing to be set right when they are wrong. They are ready to acknowledge their mistakes, and to yield to any one that will give them better Information. In this also we should labour to be like them, especially in reference to Spiritual things. We should not be unwilling or ashamed to acknowledge our mistakes, but readily see and own our errors, and gladly embrace better Information from any by whom God shall be pleased to offer it us.

4. Children out of a Natural thirst after Knowledge, are still reaching forward, and longing after higher attainments. When shall they come to Read
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such Books, to understand and do such things as others do. They think the time long till they have attained what they see others have attained. And in this also should we imitate them. We should be ever pressing forward, and earnestly reaching out after further degrees of Grace and Knowledge. We should be ever longing after that time, when we shall all come to a *perfect Man, to the Measure of the Stature of the fulness of Christ.*

And so I come to the Apostles second Illustration of the difference that is between our Knowledge here and hereafter, in the 12th Verse. *For now we see through a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face: Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.* In these words the Apostle compares our imperfect Knowledge here to the sight we have of a thing through a Glass, and our perfect Knowledge in Heaven to the immediate Vision of any thing, without the interposition of a Glass between our Eye and the Object. Then he adds an explication of the comparison: *Now we know in part, but then shall I know as also I am known.* Through a
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Glass, so our Translators have render'd it, and not in a Glass as some others. I shall not take upon me to contradict those Learned Men who were employed in that Translation: especially seeing their rendring the words in that manner is very agreeable to the Scope of the Apostle, and seeing also the Original will fairly admit of it. As for the comparison, that we may the better understand the import of it, we must consider the parts of it severally, and enquire both what our seeing through a Glass implies, and what our seeing Face to Face.

Concerning the former of these. What we see through a Glass, we see not so clearly and exactly as when we see a thing without the interposition of a Glass. Thus when we see a thing thro' a Glass Window, or through a Glass drawn over it, as Jewellers and Goldsmiths have a Glass drawn over their precious things to keep them bright and clean. I say in this case we have a more dark, imperfect and obscure vision of the thing, than when the Glass is removed, and the object is immediately presented to the Eye of the beholder. And the like difference there is between
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our Knowledge of God and Heavenly things here and hereafter. We may think we see these things in this Life pretty clearly and distinctly ; but when we come to Heaven and have an immediate sight of them, without the intervention of a Glass, through which we here behold them, we shall acknowledge that we never saw them to the purpose before, and that while we were here, we saw little better than the Man in the Gospel immediately after that Christ had opened his Eyes, who saw Men so confusedly that he could hardly distinguish them from Trees. The Impressions that are made on the Mind by what is seen through a Glass are easily lost and forgotten ; the reason whereof is because the Impressions are weaker. And so it is also in Spiritual things, they being seen only as through a Glass, they make not such strong and lasting Impressions upon the Mind as they shall make hereafter. And hence it is that after we have in some good measure understood them, we come again within a little while either to question the Truth of them, or to lose much of our former apprehensions of them. The things which now seem to be clear and mani-

fest to us, after some Time appear dark and doubtful.

To apply this briefly.

Use. Though we see Heavenly things while we are here as through a Glass, yet let us not despise the Day of small things, let us not undervalue these darker and more imperfect discoveries of Heavenly things, which God affords us in this Life.

1. 'Tis a great and just matter of Thankfulness that God lets us see these things though but as through a Glass. He might have denied us the Knowledge of them altogether; he might have left us in the Condition of Heathens who set in darkness and in the shadow of Death. He might have refused to afford us as much as any one glimpse of Heavenly things.

2. As 'tis his Mercy that we see any thing at all of the things of another World, so 'tis Mercy that in the discovery of them God condescends to our weakness, shewing them us as through a Glass, because we could not bear the immediate and full sight of them while we are here. When God would cause
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his Glory to pass before *Moses, Exodus* 33. 20, 21, 22, 23. he told him, he could not see his Face, for no Man could see that and Live; and therefore he is put in a clift of a Rock, and God covers him with his hand while he passeth by, and then takes away his hand and lets him see his back parts only. Our frail Nature could not endure to see God as he is in himself, and therefore God shews himself to us here as through a Glass, reserving the immediate vision of himself, and the clearer manifestations of his Glory till we come to be rendred capable thereof, as hereafter we shall be.

3. 'Tis also just matter of Thankfulness that we know that this lower way of knowing God is but for a while; the time is hastening when we shall no longer see as through a Glass, but see God Face to Face.

And this brings me to the second part of the comparison: Now we see thro' a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face. We often Read in Scripture of the Face of God, but in all such passages of Scripture, the word Face, when attributed to God, is not to be taken properly as

when Face is attributed to Man : For God being not a Corporal Substance, but a Spirit, can have no Face materially taken, and properly so called. 'Tis therefore such a form of Speech as in which God is pleased by way of gracious condescension to our weakness, to speak of himself after the manner of Men, which he is wont to do many other ways, as when he attributes to himself Eyes, and Hands, and Arms, and the like. Now concerning the phrase in the Text, of seeing God Face to Face, it notes three things.

1. A direct and immediate Vision of God ; and so in this place 'tis opposed to our seeing him only through a Glass.

2. It signifies a clear Vision of God ; so here also as standing in opposition to our seeing him through a Glass darkly, *en avizuals*, in a Riddle, as 'tis in the Original.

3. It notes sweet and familiar intercourse and converse with him. So *Exodus* 33. 11. God is said to have spoken to Moses Face to Face, as a Man speaketh unto his Friend. So again *Dent.* 34. 10. *There arose not a Prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew Face to Face.* The two former of these,
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our immediate and clear Vision or Sight of God are here intended ; for the Apostle is speaking of our Knowledge. And this is that which St. *John* speaks, *1 John 3. 2. We shall see him as he is :* And so the Apostle here also in the very next clause ; *Now know I in part, but then shall I know as also I am known.*

Use i. If hereafter we shall see God face to face, how unspeakably sweet and comfortable will that vision of God be ! Some little discovery of God's Love to us here, how sweet and satisfying is it to us ! The Servants of God have valued this above all Earthly Things. While Earthly-minded Men earnestly court and make out after the Things of this World, *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us,* saith *David* ; this was that which put gladness in his Heart, more than in the time that their Corn and Wine increased. *David* had more true Satisfaction and sound Comfort, in the light of God's Countenance, and in the sense of his Love, than they had in the richest confluence of all Earthly Things, *Psal. 4. 6, 7.* And elsewhere he professeth, that in God's Favour is Life, *Psal.*

Pfal. 30. 5. and that his Loving-kindness is better than Life, *Pfal.* 63. 3. What think we then of Heaven? If the sight of his Back-parts only have so much Sweetness and Satisfaction, what will it be to see his Face? When he shall discover himself to us clearly and fully in his Love and Kindness, and in all those sweet, comfortable, and honourable relations which may endear him to us. *The King's Favour is as dew upon the grass. In the light of the King's Countenance is Life, and his Favour is as a Cloud of the latter Rain.* O then what will the Favour of God be, when the light of his Countenance shall shine upon us in its full strength and lustre?

Prov. 19.
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Prov. 16.
15.

Add hereunto, that whereas here if we see the light of God's favourable Countenance shining on us to day, we are again in the dark to morrow, and we have no constant enjoyment of those Comforts which God sometimes affords us; when we come to Heaven there shall be no eclipses of God's Favour, no intermission of our enjoyments of God, and of the Beatifical Vision of his Face to Eternity: *In the presence of God there is fulness of Joy, and*

Psal. 16.
11.

*and at his right-hand there are Pleasures
for evermore.*

Use 2. If we shall see God Face to Face when we come to Heaven, how great a change shall there be made in us, whereby we shall be render'd capable of such an immediate view of God in his Glory ! Here frail and sinful Men could not bear the immediate sight of the Glorious Majesty of God. We read in Scripture that if Men at any time did but apprehend or think they had seen God, they were so affrighted that they presently concluded they should dye. Instances hereof we have in *Ma-noah*, *Judg.* 13. 22. and in *Gideon*, *Judg.* 6. 22, 23. But in Heaven where God shall discover much more of his Glory to us than ever was discovered to any mortal Man here, we shall be so far from being unable to bear it, that it will be the unspeakable Delight and Ravishment of our Souls to behold it. Surely therefore in our glorified Estate, there will be such a change made in us as is far beyond all our present apprehensions. The Apostle speaking but of the change of our Bodies, brings in the Almighty Power of God for effecting it ;

it; Phil. 3. 21. *He shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.* But to make such frail Creatures as we are capable of seeing God Face to Face, and that with unspeakable Delight and Complacency, how great a Work is this, and how great a Change shall we then undergo! Well might the Apostle say, *We know not what we shall be hereafter,* 1 Joh. 3. 2. The Condition that we are waiting for is so transcendently excellent and glorious, that whatsoever God hath revealed concerning it in Scripture, is but to give us a glimpse thereof, God dealing with us as Parents sometimes deal with a Child, giving it with one glance of its Eye to see a little of some fine thing, that is presently covered again with the Hand, and withdrawn from its sight. So much only it sees of it as to make it apprehend it to be no common or ordinary thing, and that's all.

Use 3. How should we comfort and encourage our selves with the Hopes of this blissful Vision! Here we see many
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a sight that we are little pleased with ; many a rueful spectacle that makes our Hearts ake.

1. We see much Sin, and defilement in our selves and others.

2. Much Sorrow and Anguish, many Troubles and Afflictions, the bitter Fruits of Sin.

3. Much Vanity and Emptyness in our best Things, our choicest Earthly Comforts. Wherefore *Solomon* looking no further than present Things, (for *Eccles. 4. 2, 3.* there he takes not in the Consideration of Eternity) praises the Dead above the Living, and prefers him that hath not yet been, before them both. But now the sight of God in Heaven shall make us amends for all.

(1.) There we shall see no Sin ; the bitter root of the Corruption of our Nature, and every string thereof shall be plucked up, and we shall be presented unto God pure and holy, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, *Eph. 5. 27.* Then we shall be clothed with white Robes, *Rev. 7. 9.* or as the same thing is express'd, *Rev. 19. 8.* we shall be arrayed in fine Linnen, clean and white, which is the Righteousness of the Saints.

(2.) There

(2.) There we shall see no Sorrow. God shall wipe away all tears from our Eyes, *Rev.* 21. 8.

(3.) There we shall see no Vanity or Emptiness; we shall have a sight there which will fill all the most enlarged Desires of our Souls. With the Hopes hereof *David* comforted himself, *Psal.* 17. 15. *As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

When some rare publick Shew is to be set forth, as in solemn Triumphs after great Victories, or at the Coronation of Princes, or the like, as the time set for such Solemnities draws near, and when all Things in order thereunto are now in a readiness, how do Persons that take delight in such Things, long that the Day were come! The Night before perhaps they can hardly sleep for the thoughts of what they are to see the next Day. And should not we much more long for that blissful sight, in comparison whereof all the glorious Things of this World are but empty Trifles! And that's a sight that shall not pass away as these here do, leaving us as much troubled that they are so soon gone, as we were delighted with them

them while they were present. 'Tis true, God here causeth his Goodness only to pass before us sometimes ; but in Heaven it shall not pass before us, but stand still, and remain in our Eye and full View to Eternity. O that our Hearts could be lifted up in the lively Hopes of this Sight, and that the Breathing of our Souls after it, might be those of *David, As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God ; My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God ; when shall I come and appear before God ?* So much of the Comparison : Now follows the Explication of it, in the last clause of the 12th Verse ; *Now know I in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known.* To see through a Glass darkly is explained by knowing in part ; and to see Face to Face is explained by knowing as we are known. Having so fully spoken of this whole matter already, all that I shall add, or need to add, is, concerning the last words, *Then shall I know, even as also I am known.* The meaning of which words is, then shall I know God, even as I am known of God, or as God knows me. Now this similitude or likeness

ness that is between our knowing God, and God's knowing us, lyes in these two Things.

1. God knows us immediately and directly ; he knows us by direct intuition, without the help of any other thing representing us unto him ; and so hereafter shall we know him by immediate Vision or Intuition. This the Scriptures in divers places expresse by our seeing God. So *Matth. 5. 8. Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God.* *Heb. 12. 14. Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* *1 John 3. 2. When he shall appear, we shall see him as he is.* And *Rev. 22. 3, 4.* after a large and glorious Description of the New *Jerusalem*, this is added concerning it, *And there shall be no more Curse, but the Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his Servants shall serve him ; and they shall see his Face, and his Name shall be in their Foreheads.*

2. God knows us perfectly, his all-seeing Eye looks into us, and pierceth thorough us, as I may say : Whatsoever is in us, lyes open and naked before him who searcheth the Reins, and tryeth the Heart. And we also in some sense shall hereafter know God perfectly.

ly. 'Tis indeed impossible that we being Creatures should have such a full and comprehensive Knowledge of God, as God hath of himself. In this Sense is *Zophar* to be understood, *Job* 11. 7, 8, 9. *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection? It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.* That is, God being Infinite, it is utterly impossible that thou being a Finite Creature should fully understand him. But yet I say in some Sense we also shall know God perfectly when we come to Heaven. And this in a three-fold respect.

1. We shall then know God perfectly in comparison of that dark, short and imperfect Knowledge of him which we have here. In this Sense the Apostle before in the 10th Verse, speaking of our Knowledge, saith, when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 'Tis then comparatively a perfect Knowledge of God which we shall be endued with hereafter, though not absolutely perfect.

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2. We shall then know God perfectly according to our Measure, and the utmost capacity of our Faculties. Our Souls are little Vessels in comparison of God, and cannot take in much of an Infinite Being ; yet these little Vessels shall be filled up to the brim, and know as much of God as they are capable of knowing. Now when we know as much of God as we can know of him, when our whole capacity is filled up, we may be said to know God perfectly ; perfectly with respect to our small measure, though not so with respect to his Infinite and Incomprehensible Essence.

3. We may be said hereafter to know God perfectly with Relation to our Happiness. We shall then have all that Knowledge of him that may conduce to our Felicity. We shall then so know him, as we shall have no Reason to desire to know any more of him. We shall be fully satisfied with our Knowledge of him, as being every way sufficient for all the ends of our Knowledge of him. And he knows God perfectly as to the condition of a Creature, that needs no further Knowledge of him in reference to any of all those great ends for which the Knowledge of God is desirable.

firable. And so much concerning the meaning of those word, *Then shall I know as also I am known.* Now to apply this in a few words.

Use. Shall we hereafter see God Face to Face, and know God as we also are known of God? Then let us be exhorted to make preparation for this Vision of God, for this immediate view and sight of him. Let us consider that the God whom we hope to see Face to Face, is a God Glorious in Holiness, *Exodus 15. 11.* A God of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and that cannot look on Iniquity, *Hab. 1. 13.* with whom Evil shall not dwell, neither shall the foolish stand in his sight, *Psal. 5. 4, 5.* Wherefore, if we ever look to be admitted to that Beatifical Vision and Fruition of God, two things must be done by us.

1. We must see that our Natures be changed. *For without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12. 14.* *Except a Man be Born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God, John 3. 3.*

2. We must not rest here, but be still endeavouring to make a further progress in Holiness, cleansing our selves from all filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, and

perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God, *2 Cor. 7. 1.* And purifying our selves still more and more, as God whom we hope to see and enjoy is pure, *1 John 3. 3.*

All ye who cannot indure to hear of leaving your Sins, who still go on in them, and are resolved so to do, never make account of being admitted to the Vision of God; that Happiness is not designed for any Impenitent, finally Impenitent Sinner.

And if your inward thought should be, as perhaps it may be, that 'tis no great matter if you be deprived of that Vision, you will be contented to run the hazard thereof, so that you may enjoy the pleasures of Sin while you are here, you may do well to take these two things into consideration.

1. That you cannot fall short of Heaven, and be deprived of the Blessedness of seeing and enjoying God, but you must inevitably plunge your self into Eternal Misery. If you might miss Heaven, and yet still enjoy the pleasures of Sin (which now you choose) to Eternity, or if when this Life ends you were either to go to Heaven, or to return into nothing, and to be incapable of Punishment, then the case would be
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somewhat alter'd ; but if you be not everlastingly Happy in the Vision and Enjoyment of God, you must be for ever miserable, for there is no middle condition.

2. Though you may think it now no great Evil to be deprived of the Vision and Fruition of God, if it should so come to pass that through your final unbelief and impenitency you should be deprived of it, you would not then think it a small Evil. Be assured of it, you would then have other thoughts of this matter than at present you have. Then the very loss of Heaven would be matter of most intolerable and endless Anguish of Spirit unto you. Then to think of the unutterable and endless Joys of Heaven, which you have lost by preferring the short and vanishing Pleasures of Sin before them, would cut your very Heart, and make you ready to tear your self to pieces if you were able, and all to no purpose ; for if the whole Creation should joyn together, endeavouring to put you once more into a capacity of Salvation, and so procure you again the offers of Mercy but for one Hour, it could not be obtained. Consider how many things would then come in upon
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your Spirit to wound and pierce it most direfully, and to make the loss of Heaven an insupportable Burthen to it. As,

1. That you should foolishly despise and lose an Happiness that is both unspeakable and endless.

2. That you lose it for a trifle; for those sinful delights and carnal satisfactions that are not worth a Rush.

3. That you should lose it after it had been so often proffered you, and your acceptance of it so earnestly solicited by all manner of Arguments that might be thought to have the greatest force to work upon you.

4. That you should lose it when so many Thousands accepted of it, and attained it; and amongst them many of your Friends and Acquaintance, and many of those who had never one half of those advantages for attaining it which you enjoyed,

5. That you should lose an Happiness contrived for you by Infinite Wisdom and Love, and after that so much had been done in order to the making of you actually partaker of it; after that the Eternal Son of God had taken our Nature on him on purpose to bring about and compass it; after that by a
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most Shameful, Painful and Accursed Death he had made satisfaction to Divine Justice for our Sins ; after that he had made Proclamation of Forgiveness of Sins and everlasting Salvation to be obtained by all that Believe and Repent ; and after that so many means outward and inward had been made use of for working Faith and Repentance in you, and after that in respect of that partial effect which these means take on you ; it might often be said of you that almost you were perswaded to be a Christian, and that you were not far from the Kingdom of God.

6. And Lastly, after all this to lose Heaven irrecoverably, to lose it once for all, so to lose it as henceforth for ever to be out of all hopes of attaining it, to lye for ever under an utter despair of attaining it ; to have lost Heaven with these circumstances will be a never dying Worm to fill your Soul with as much vexation and anguish as 'tis capable of to Eternity. Wherefore think not the loss of seeing and enjoying God to be such an inconsiderable thing. If you do, you will be sufficiently convinced of your great mistake hereafter, when there will be place enough for

disquieting, and vexing, and tormenting your self endlessly for your Folly and Madneſs, but none for Repentance to Salvation not to be Repented of.

And now this might have ſufficed to have been ſaid concerning our ſeeing God hereafter Face to Face, and our knowing him even as we are known, but that there yet remain two or three Questions that may be moved, unto which I ſhall ſpeak a little.

The Firſt Question is, what time doth the Apoſtle intend, ſaying, that *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away*, and we ſhall ſee God Face to Face, and know him as we are known? Whether or no ſhall this be immediately after Death, or not till after the Reſurrection of the laſt Day?

Anſw. 1. 'Tis not to be doubted but that the Souls of Believers are immediately after Death admitted to the Viſion and Fruition of God. *This Day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradice*, ſaid our Saviour to the Penitent Thief, *Luke 23. 43.* *And make to your ſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs, that when ye fail they may receive you into Everlaſting Habitations*, *Luke 16. 9.* And
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so the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *We know that if our Earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens.* So again in the 6, 7, and 8th verses. *We are always confident, knowing that while we are at Home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord ; (for we walk by Faith and not by Sight) We are confident I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord.* To the same purpose it is that he saith, Phil. 1. 23. *I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ which is far better.* From all which Scriptures put together these things are evident.

1. That the Souls of the Faithful immediately after Death enter into everlasting Habitations, and have an House Eternal in the Heavens.

2. That as soon as they cease to be any longer here in the Body, they are with the Lord.

3. That the difference between our Estate in this Life and that after Death, is this, that as long as we are here we walk by Faith, but after Death, by Sight. So then, if immediately after Death the Souls of Good Men are received into
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Everlasting Habitations, have an House Eternal in the Heavens, are present with the Lord, and walk by Sight and not by Faith, it must needs be that they are immediately admitted to the Vision and Fruition of God. And hence it is, that *the Spirits of Just Men made perfect*, that is, the Souls of Believers after Death, are reckoned with the Church Triumphant, Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24. *Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels; to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New-Covenant.* Now if the Souls of Men that have departed hence in the Faith are of the number of the Church Triumphant in Heaven, then it cannot be questioned but that they are admitted to the sight and enjoyment of God.

2. Yet have they not so full and clear a Vision of God in the mean time as they shall have after the general Resurrection; and therefore the time of Christ's second coming to raise the Dead and Judge the World is called by way
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of eminency, the time of refreshing, *Acts* 3. 19. and the day of Redemption, *Eph.* 4. 30. *Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are Sealed unto the Day of Redemption*: In the same Sense the Apostle speaking of himself and other Believers, saith, *We who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within our selves waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body*, *Rom.* 8. 23. He means, waiting to receive at the Day of Judgment the Complement of our Adoption and Redemption, the full of all those benefits and priviledges which God hath promised to bestow upon his Redeemed, upon those whom he hath predestinated to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ, as the same Apostle speaks, *Eph.* 1. 5. So then, though our seeing God Face to Face, and our knowing him even as also we are known, be to be understood with relation to the whole time after Death, yet doth it more especially relate to the condition of Believers after the general Resurrection. And so much in answer to that Question.

The Second Question is, how the Apostle is to be understood when he saith, that we shall hereafter see God Face to Face ?

Face? Doth he mean that we shall see God with Corporeal Eyes, with these very Eyes of the Body by which we see Corporeal things, or only with the Eyes of our Minds.

Answ. 1. 'Tis not good that we should be too curiously inquisitive touching the manner or our seeing God in Heaven.

For First the Scripture is sparing in that matter, and says little. We are only told that we shall see *God Face to Face*, and that we shall *see him as he is*, but in what manner, or with what Eyes we shall see him, whether with the Eyes of our Bodies or our Minds, it doth not declare.

2. We have other matters of higher concernment to busie our selves about. 'Tis of far greater consequence to us that we should give all diligence to get assurance that we are of the number of those who shall hereafter be admitted to the sight and enjoyment of God; and to labour to be fitted for that Vision of him.

3. When we once know our selves to be of the number of true Believers, then may this satisfy us at present, that our own experience shall one day resolve us touching the manner of our seeing God. We shall one day see him,

him, and when we see him, we shall know how and with what Eyes we see him. In the mean time let us not over-much trouble our Minds about that which we can never fully understand till we come to Heaven.

2. Yet so far as we can gather from what is revealed concerning God in Scripture, we cannot apprehend how we should see God immediately with our Bodily Eyes (though Christ according to his Humane Nature we shall, as *Job* speaks, Chap. 19. 25, 26, 27. *I know that my Redeemer Liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth; and though after my Skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for my self, and mine Eyes shall behold and not another.*) Which words, though many of the best Interpreters, understand of his seeing God after the General Resurrection, yet sundry other Learned Men, and Sound Divines, understand those words of *Job's* Restauration, after those sad Afflictions and deplorable Calamities, with which he was for a time overwhelmed. Though even those Learned Men do not wholly exclude the other Interpretation, for they make *Job's* Hearing,

Hearing, and his Restauration to his former Estate, or rather to an Estate of greater Prosperity and Splendor, than before his sad Tryals he injoyed. I say, they make this Wonderful change of his Condition for the better, a Type of the Resurrection. I say we cannot apprehend how we should see God immediately with our Bodily Eyes.

For, 1. *God is a Spirit*, John 4. 24. and there being no proportion between a Spiritual Substance and a Corporeal Organ, such as that of our Bodily Eye is, how can we conceive that the Spiritual Nature of God should be the immediate object of our Sight ?

2. God is in Holy Scripture represented to us as Invisible. So 1 Tim. 1. 17. *Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only Wise God, be Honour and Glory.* 1 Tim. 6. 16. *Who only hath Immortality, Dwelling in the Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath seen nor can see.* Coloss. 1. 15. Christ is said to be *the Image of the Invisible God.* And Heb. 11. 27. *Moses is said to have endured as seeing him who is Invisible ; that is, as seeing God by the Eye of Faith, who is Invisible by Corporeal Eyes.*

Object:

Object. 1. You will reply, 'tis true, God is invisible to us here, but we shall be wonderfully changed hereafter, in Body as well as in Soul; and then why may not our Senses be so elevated and heightened, as that we may even with our Bodily Eyes see Spiritual Substances?

Answer. 'Tis not indeed safe for us to be too peremptory in things that are so far above our reach; neither must we take upon us rashly to limit Gods Power, and absolutely to set bounds to it, determining what he can do, and what he cannot do, unless in matters that evidently imply weakness or a manifest contradiction. But yet as to the present business, there seems not to be much force in the Objection. For though our very Bodies hereafter shall be wonderfully changed in our Glorified Estate, yet still they shall retain the Nature of Bodies though Glorified; and the Eye shall be still a Corporeal Organ, as now 'tis, and therefore still there remains the same difficulty of apprehending how there should be any proportion between an Immaterial or Spiritual Substance, and a Bodily Organ, such as the Eye of the Body is.

Object.

Object. 2. But you will further object, that the Apostle saith, we shall see God Face to Face; therefore it seems that we shall see him with our Bodily Eyes.

Answer. There is as little force in this Objection as in the former. For as we cannot thence conclude that God hath a Corporeal Face, as we have, so neither can we thence infer that we shall see him with Corporeal Eyes, as we do one another.

Besides, 'tis manifest that the sight of God with the Eye of the Soul is beatifical, or sufficient to make us Happy.

For 1. The Blessed Angels always behold the Face of God, *Matth.* 18. 10. and 'tis their unspeakable Happiness that they do so.

2. The Souls of Good Men after Death, while they continue in the state of separation from their Bodies see God, and are unconceivably Happy in seeing him: and yet neither the Blessed Angels, nor the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, have any Corporeal Eye, or material Organ to see him withal. So then 'tis most probable that our future Happiness chiefly consists in seeing God with our Spirits as the Angels do. And that
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God hath ways, unknown to us poor dark Creatures, of representing himself immediately to the view of the Souls of Men as he doth to the Angels, cannot in the least be questioned.

3. Yet is it not to be denied but that God may and will hereafter in Heaven manifest himself in a most Glorious manner even to our Senses. The Bodily Eye shall see that Glorious Lustre with which we shall be infinitely Delighted and Ravished. But then we must consider, that this Heavenly Lustre that runs into the Bodily Eye, is but a Creature by which God represents and externally manifests something of his Glory, and not the very Essence of God himself. But seeing the Scripture is in great part silent in these things, I shall here again caution my self and others, that 'tis safest for us to be sober in our Enquiries into them, ever remembering that Divine Oracle, Deut. 29. 29. *Secret things belong to God, but things revealed to us and to our Children to do them.*

Quest. 3. Seeing we see God so darkly here, and we know him so imperfectly, and seeing the Scriptures testify concerning him, that as to our Bodily Eyes

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he is invisible ; how may we represent him to our selves in our Addresses to him. This is that which hath much troubled and perplexed many. They know not under what form to apprehend him and conceive of him when they set themselves to Pray.

Ans. These Persons trouble themselves causelessly. 'Tis neither necessary nor lawful to frame in our Minds any Corporeal Form or Shape of God. For there is nothing in all this visible World, nor among all the Creatures visible or invisible, that is fit to represent him. 'Tis not possible that an Infinite and External Being should be represented by any Finite Creature how Glorious or Excellent soever. Any Creature must of necessity misrepresent him to us, and beget in our Minds false conceptions of him. Wherefore what the Prophet saith of material Images of God, *Hab.* 2. 18. that *they are Teachers of Lyes*, the same may be said of all such Notions and Images of him in our Minds whereby we conceive him to be like any of the Creatures.

Object. 1. But you will say, how then must we conceive of God ? If we may not conceive him to be like any of the things

things that we see here, or have seen, how can we have any thoughts of him at all ?

Answ. We may in some weak measure conceive of him, though Shape him not in our Minds after the likeness of any thing here below that we have seen. We frame in our Minds some conceptions of Angels, and of our own Souls, and yet we never saw any thing that is truly like either the one or the other. Now as for God, we have enough in Scripture to order and regulate our thoughts concerning him. He hath therein revealed so much of himself as it concerns us to know while we are here ; and according to what he hath revealed are we to conceive of him. We must think of him according to his Attributes, and according to those discoveries and declarations of his Nature which we have in his Word. We must think of him as of an Infinite, Eternal, Inchangeable, and most Excellent Being that hath all imaginable Perfections in and from himself, and infinitely greater and higher Perfections than 'tis possible for us to conceive. We must represent him to our selves as one that is Almighty, most Wise, most Just, most Gracious,

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most Merciful, most True and Faithful, and the like. Thus we shall find the Servants of God have conceived of him, and expressed their Conceptions of him in their Prayers and Doxologies. So did *Nehemiah*, chap. 1. 5. *I beseech thee (saith he) O Lord God of Heaven, the Great and Terrible God, that keepeth Covenant and Mercy for them that Love him and observe his Commandments.* So in like manner did *Moses*, saying, *before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the World : Even from Everlasting to Everlasting thou art God*, *Psal.* 90. 2. And thus the Lord Proclaims his own Name and Nature, *Exodus* 34. 6, 7. *The Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering and Abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity and Transgression, and Sin.* So *Daniel*, chap. 9. 4. *O Lord, the Great and Dreadful God, keeping Covenant and Mercy to them that Love thee and keep thy Commandments.* So the Apostle *St. Paul*, *1 Tim.* 1. 17. *To the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible and the only Wise God, be Glory and Honour, for ever and ever.*

Object.

Object. 2. But I find that in Prayer and upon divers other occasions, many strange Forms and Shapes of God come into my Mind, and I cannot be rid of them. Sometimes I fancy him to be like one thing; another while like another. In this case what should I do?

Ans. 1. Give not way to them, but cast them out again as fast as they come into your Mind.

2. Labour still to reduce your thoughts to some of the Attributes of God, regulating them by Scripture.

Object. 3. But you will say, Do not the Scriptures often set forth God by visible things? Do we not Read *Exodus* 15. 3. *the Lord is a Man of War*? And do we not elsewhere often Read that Eyes, and Arms, and Hands, and Weapons are Attributed to him? Why then may we not conceive of him according to these and many other Scriptures that so represent him to us?

Ans. Though God be thus set forth in Scriptures, yet 'tis evident that it was never Gods intent that we should so grossly apprehend him. The Scriptures which in way of condescension to our weakness sometimes speak thus of him, in other places inform us plainly that he

is a Spirit, John 4. 24. that he is *Invisible*, Coloff. 1. 15. that he is unexpressible and unconceivable by any Corporeal Shape or Form, Isa. 40. 18. *To whom will ye liken God? Or what likenesses will ye compare unto him?* That he is Immenſe and Incomprehenſible; that all the Nations of the World are unto him but as a drop of a Bucket, and are counted as the ſmall Duſt of a Ballance; that all Nations before him are as nothing, and that they are counted to him leſs than nothing and Vanity, Isa. 40. 15. 17. And to the end that Men might not miſapprehend him, or frame conceits of him by any of theſe things which are his Creatures, and the work of his Hands, when at the giving of the Law in Mount Sinai, he did moſt Gloriously reveal himſelf, he appeared not in any viſible Shape or likenesſ, Deut. 4. 15. Wherefore when God ſets forth himſelf by any of the Creatures, or by any thing that is in them, he thereby only intends to lead us to the apprehenſions of thoſe his Attributes or Works which ſomething in ſuch Creatures ſhadoweth forth unto us. So when the Scripture ſaith, *The Lord is a Man of War*, it thereby gives us to underſtand, that he is Armed
with

with Power to overcome and subdue all his Enemies, and the Enemies of his Church and People. When it Attributes Arms and Hands to him, it would thereby make us apprehensive of his Might and Activity, when it Attributes Eyes unto him it would have us understand his Knowledge and Providence to be thereby intended, when he threatens that he will be unto Wicked Men as a Lyon, or a Leopard, or a Bear, we are under those Representations to understand the fierceness of his Indignation, and the Severity of his Justice.

Object. 4. But unless we should apprehend God under some Shape, how could our thoughts be fixed on him?

Ans. 1. To frame thoughts of God that are not agreeable to his Nature, or consonant to those Revelations of himself to us which he hath made in Scripture, is a very ill and undue means for fixing our thoughts. By the same Reason you might as well say, it were very expedient and useful for the fixing of our thoughts on God the better, to have an Image or an Idol before our Eyes when we Pray, to represent him to us. If God had judged this a Meet expedient, or useful help for fixing our thoughts

on himself, he would never have so expressly forbidden that way of Worship, and so severely threatened the practices of it, as in the Second Commandment he hath done.

2. For the fixing of our thoughts on God in Prayer, let us make use of such means as he himself allows and approves of.

1. Let us often Meditate on the Attributes of God, his infinite Power, Wisdom, Justice, Holiness, Goodness, Truth, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Unchangeableness; and let us get deep and abiding Impressions of these and other Attributes upon our Hearts.

2. Let us upon all emergent occasions single out those Attributes that are most suitable to our present Condition, and Exigencies, as his Wisdom when we need his Counsel and Direction; his Power when we are conflicting with any great difficulties; his Justice and Holiness when we are Tempted to any Sin, or through the strength and violence of our Corruption in present danger of running into Sin; his infinite Mercy when we are ready to Despair; his Truth when we find we begin to doubt of his Promises; his Unchangeableness

ableness when we question the continuance of his Favour to us. If we thus set those Attributes of God before us that best suit the present Condition of our Souls, we shall find it so much the more easie to fix our thoughts upon them.

3. Let us be ever watchful over our Thoughts and Fancies, and keep our Hearts with all diligence at all times, that we may never entertain any undue thoughts of God, or frame to our selves any such conceptions of him as are not agreeable to his Nature. The more narrowly we watch our Hearts, and the more heedfully we observe and govern our Fancies at other times, the less shall we be molested with undue thoughts of God in Prayer.

4. Let us not rush into the presence of God rudely and irreverently, but so far as our occasions will permit, let's take a little time to call in our thoughts, and fix them on God before we enter upon the Duty of Prayer. A few serious thoughts of God into whose presence we are to come, immediately before we address our selves to the Duty, will be a good help to prevent those our extravagant Fancies and misconceptions

tions of him which we find we are too apt to give way to, and entertain. And thus I have done with the second part of this Chapter, in which Charity is commended from its duration, and in that respect preferred before Prophecies, Tongues and Knowledge.

I now proceed to the last Verse of the Chapter ; *And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three, but the greatest of these is Charity.* In these words we have the Conclusion of the Apostles Discourse concerning the excellency of Charity, which, according to the Judgment of some of the best Interpreters, contains another Argument to prove the excellency of that Grace. Before the Apostle had preferred it before the most excellent Gifts ; here he prefers it before the chief of all other Graces, Faith and Hope. For our better understanding of the words, two things are to be inquired into, what Faith the Apostle here understands, and what the importance of the particle *Now* in this place is ; *Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity.* For the first of these, although the Apostle *ver.* the 2d. had been speaking of the Faith of Miracles, yet 'tis not that
Faith

Faith which he now speaks of, but Justifying Faith, and that

1. Because he had before preferred Charity before the Faith of Miracles, saying, though I have all Faith, that is, the highest degree of that kind of Faith, so that I could remove Mountains and have no Charity, I am nothing. Wherefore it is not probable, that he would here again compare it with that Faith.

2. Because he joyns it with Hope, which is also another eminent Grace, and an effect or fruit of Justifying Faith. And this may suffice to have been spoken concerning the first particular, namely, what kind of Faith we are here to understand. Now as concerning the second particular, to wit, what we may conceive to be the import of the particle *Now* in this place, I shall take it for granted, that it must here relate unto Time, and so understanding it, these words '*Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity,*' may have a double Sense.

1. They may be understood in way of opposition unto what he had before spoken concerning extraordinary Gifts. Those extraordinary Gifts were but for

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a time, chiefly for the first Ages of the Church. But though those Gifts cease, yet still these Graces remain, and even Now abide, and shall be of standing and perpetual use to the end of the World, as long as God shall have a Church upon Earth.

2. The words may be understood in opposition to the Life to come ; *Now abideth Faith, Hope, and Charity, these three* ; they are all of perpetual use as long as we are here : But not so hereafter ; for though Charity shall never fail, yet Faith and Hope shall extend no farther than this Life, for there shall be no use of them in Heaven. When we come thither we shall have attained the end of our Faith, the Salvation of our Souls, and be put into actual possession of the things hoped for. So then, whereas the Apostle saith, *Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three, but the greatest of these is Charity* ; 'tis as much as if he had said, it's true, there are besides Charity, other Graces also of Great and Universal use in the Church Militant for all Times and Ages thereof, the chief of which are Faith and Hope, but yet however neither of them may be compared with Charity, that excel-

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lent Grace goes beyond them both. These two points therefore we have in the words.

1. That Faith, Hope and Charity, are Graces of great and singular use, and shall so be to the end of the World.

2. That though they be all three very eminent and singularly useful Graces, yet the most excellent among them all is Charity. To begin with the former of these ; Faith, Hope and Charity, are Graces of great and singular use. Concerning the excellency and usefulness of Faith, much might be said ; I shall confine my self to the particulars ensuing.

1. Faith is that Grace by which alone we apprehend Christ to our Justification. Hence is Justification so often ascribed to Faith. *By him, that is, by Christ, all that believe are Justified from all those things from which they could not be Justified by the Law of Moses, Acts. 13. 39. To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his Name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive Remission of Sins, that is, shall be Justified and Acquitted from his Sins, Acts 10. 43. Being Justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, Rom. 5. 1.* Sin it is that makes a breach between

tween God and us. *Your Iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your Sins have hid his Face from you,* Isa. 59. 2. But now by Faith our Persons being Justified, and the Guilt of our Sins removed, the breach that was between God and us is closed up.

3. Faith brings us into the Honourable, Sweet and Comfortable Estate of Gods Adopted Children ; *to as many as received him*, that is, to as many as by a lively Faith received Christ, *to them he gave Power to be the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his Name*, John 1. 12. *By him we have access by Faith into the Grace wherein we stand*, that is, into the Grace of Sonship and Adoption, Rom. 5. 2. By Faith we have freedom and boldness to make our Addresses unto God in Prayer. *In Christ We have boldness, and access with confidence thro' the Faith of him*, Eph. 3. 12. Through Faith in Christ it is that we are encouraged to go unto God in Prayer. *Having such an High Priest, let us draw near with a true Heart, in full assurance of Faith*, Heb. 10. 21, 22.

4. Faith is the Root of all other Graces. *Faith purifieth the Heart*, Acts 15. 9. and consequently purifieth and clean-

cleanseth the whole Man, and the Life and Conversation; for *from the Heart are the Issues of Life*, Prov. 4. 23. As the Heart is, such is the Man, and such are his ways, and the course of his Life.

5. Faith makes all our Services pleasing and acceptable unto God. *Without Faith it is impossible to please him*, Heb.

11. 6. *By Faith Abel offered a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain*, Heb. 11. 4. A Sacrifice which was in Gods Account of greater worth and value, and found acceptance with God, which *Cain's* Sacrifice did not, because it was not presented unto him in Faith.

6. Faith is a Grace most useful and necessary in every Estate and Condition. Without Faith a Man can neither use Prosperity, no bear Adversity aright. In either condition, *the Just live by Faith*, Hab. 2. 3. *The Life which I now live*, saith the Apostle, *I live by the Faith of the Son of God*, Gal. 2. 20. And so much concerning Faith. Now as for Hope, this is also many ways singularly useful. I shall give a few Instances of the usefulness of it.

I. Hope

1. Hope is a great furtherer of our growth in Grace, and Progress in Sanctification. He that hath a lively Hope of Heaven, will be thereby quickened to endeavour to be meet for Heaven. *He that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself,* 1 John 3. 3. He will be still reaching forth unto those things that are before, and earnestly pursuing greater measures of Grace; he will be *pressing towards the Mark for the Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*, as St. Paul did while he had Heaven and Eternal Glory in his Eye, *Phil. 4. 13, 14.*

2. Hope will make a Man diligent, constant, and unwearied, in the Service of God. It was the Hope of the Promise, the Hope of being made partakers of the great things which God hath promised to his Faithful Servants that made the *Israelites instantly serve God Day and Night.* Acts. 26. 7. From the Christians' Hope of the Resurrection to Life, Immortality, and final Victory over Sin, Death and the Grave, the Apostle exhorting Believers, saith, *Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your Labour*

hour is not in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58.

3. Hope will enable a Man to bear afflictions patiently, quietly, and joyfully.

1. Patiently. Patience under affliction is a fruit of Hope. While the Believer by Hope expects and waits for that Inheritance among the Saints in Light, and that Glory to be revealed hereafter, with which all the afflictions of this present time are not to be compared, it is not grievous to him to undergo whatever afflictions God is pleased to lay upon him here, especially considering that by afflictions he is prepared for Glory. Hence 'tis that we Read of the Patience of Hope, 1 *Theff.* 1. 3.

2. Quietly. Hope becalms the Spirit, and allays the turbulency of our corrupt Nature under afflictions. Wherefore when *David* would cure the unquiet Distempers of his Heart, he thus bespake himself, *Psal.* 42. 11. *Why art thou cast down O my Soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Still hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the Health of my Countenance, and my God.*

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3. Joy-

3. Joyfully. As the Apostle speaks of the patience of Hope, so doth he also of the rejoycing of Hope, *Heb.* 3. 6. It was the hope of Heaven that made those Believers, *Heb.* 10. 34. to take joyfully the spoiling of their Goods. They knew in themselves that they had in Heaven a better, and an enduring Substance. This they had in their Eye, and the hope and expectation of it made them joyful under their sufferings. Yea the Apostle goes yet a step higher, *Rom.* 5. 2, 3. We rejoyce in hope of the Glory of God, saith he, and not only so, but we Glory in Tribulations also.

4. Hope fortifies and strengthens us against Temptations. The Apostle, *Eph.* 6. 17. among other parts of the Spiritual Armour whereby we may be enabled to withstand our Spiritual Adversaries, reckons the Helmet of Salvation, that is Hope, as the same Apostle expounds himself, *1 Theff.* 5. 8. put on for an Helmet the Hope of Salvation. Hope keeps the Soul steady and fixed amidst all the violent and impetuous assaults of the Tempter, by which he endeavours to beat off the Believer from his Christian course, or to discourage him in it. And therefore the Apostle saith,
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we have hope, the Anchor of the Soul, both sure and steadfast, which entreth into that which is within the vail; that is, 'tis an Anchor fixed in Heaven, whereby the Soul is held steady, and kept from being driven and tossed hither and thither by the force of those Storms and Tempests which Satan raiseth against it.

5. Hope raiseth the Heart above this World, and enables the sound Christian to contemn it, with all the splended and desirable things thereof. Hope reacheth out after better things, and in assured expectation of them, overlooks these things as mean and inconsiderable. What made *Moses* refuse the Honours and Preferments of *Pharoah's* Court, and to chuse rather to suffer affliction with the People of God, but the Hopes of Heaven? Heaven was in his Eye, he had respect to the recompense of reward, *Heb. 11. 26.* So much concerning Hope.

Now as to the third Grace, Charity, nothing need be added concerning the dignity and singular usefulness thereof; this hath been the Apostles business throughout the Chapter, and much hath already been spoken of it.

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It only remains that I speak a word or two of the second point, *viz.* That though Faith, Hope and Charity be excellent Graces, yet Charity surpasseth them both. And this it doth in these respects.

1. Such is the Nature of Faith and Hope, that they both imply imperfection, and are suited only to a state of imperfection, which cannot be said of Charity.

And 2. by consequence Faith and Hope have place no longer than while we are here in this World, whereas Charity never faileth. As for Faith, that is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, *Heb. 11. 4.* And therefore 'tis here only that we walk by Faith, when we come to Heaven we shall walk by Sight, as the Apostle speaks, *2 Cor. 5. 7.* And so for Hope, that hath for its object something to be hereafter attained; and when once the good things hoped for are attained, our hopes is at an end. For what a Man seeth, and hath in actual possession, why doth he yet hope for? Hope that is seen is not Hope, *Rom. 8. 24.* In Heaven our Faith shall end in vision, and our hope in fruition.

3. Charity

3. Charity hath the preheminance of Faith and Hope in respect of its immediate operations and effects. Faith only takes hold of and receives, and Hope reacheth out after things hoped for ; but Charity gives out and imparts, which is of greater perfection than to receive ; for our Saviour saith, 'tis a more blessed thing to give than to receive, *Acts* 20. 35.

4. Charity hath the preheminance in respect of the extent of its usefulness. Faith and Hope do immediately and chiefly profit our selves ; the benefits of them both principally redound to a Mans own Soul ; but Charity is of a more diffusive and communicative Nature, as being helpful and serviceable to many, as hath at large appear'd by what hath been formerly spoken concerning the Properties of that Grace.

Use 1. Are Faith, Hope and Charity such excellent and singularly useful Graces ? Then are they in a very bad condition who have none of these Graces, as 'tis certain that no wicked Man is endued with them, or any one of them. Neither Faith, nor Hope, nor Charity are to be found in that Mans

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Heart,

Heart, the general and ordinary course of whose Life is Vicious and Ungodly. These Graces wheresoever they are, will have their influence upon Mens Lives, to regulate, order, and frame them in some measure according to the word of God. Faith and Hope purify the Heart and Life, and Charity disposeth a Man to the Conscientious performance of all Duties which he oweth unto God and Man. And as Charity relates to Man, under which consideration the Apostle in this Chapter describes it, it disposeth a Man to do to others as he would be done to himself. A Man whose Heart is throughly seasoned with this Grace will injure no Man, but be always ready to do all good offices to all Men, even to Enemies, as hath formerly been shewed. Wicked Men therefore, whose Hearts and Lives are impure, and who care not whom they injure so they may gratify and advantage themselves, being utterly void of these Graces, can have no sound comfort in Life or Death, as for Life though a Man should enjoy all the Prosperity that a Man is capable of in this World, yet without Faith the Wrath of God abideth on him, *John 3. 36.* and having no lively hopes of better things

things when this Life is ended, he receives his Portion in this World, and what a damp is this to all his present Jollities, when he shall consider that when this Life is gone all his Happiness is gone.

And Lastly, being destitute of Charity, as he shews no Mercy so he can expect none, and as he finds his Implacable and Revengeful Heart will not be brought to forgive his Brother, so neither must he ever expect forgiveness at the Hands of God. And then when he comes to Dye, being destitute of these Graces, how Rueful will his Condition be! either he must go out of the World full of Horreur and Despair; or which is little better, if not in some respect worse, he must go hence in a fearfully hardened and senseless Condition, dropping down into Hell, and falling into unquenchable flames before he hath any apprehensions of his danger.

Use 2. Let us all therefore endeavour to be furnished with these excellent Graces: and having attained them, let us cherish and improve them, carefully applying our selves to the use of all

those means that may promote the growth of them.

And seeing Charity is the chief and greatest of them all, let our greatest care be for the improving of that Grace, and the rather, because, beside all the Service it will do us, and all the stead it will stand us in here, it will accompany us into the other World when Faith and Hope shall take their leave of us.

SERMON

SERMON X.

Note,
This Ser-
mon was
Preached
upon oc-
casion of
the Di-
tribution
of Chari-
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ny, given
by Bene-
factors to
the Poor.

John 12. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Then took Mary a pound of Oyntment, of Spicknard, very costly, and anointed the Feet of Jesus, and wiped his Feet with her Hair : and the House was filled with the Odour of the Oyntment. Then saith one of his Disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's Son, which should betray him, why was not this Oyntment Sold for Three Hundred Pence, and given to the Poor ? This he said, not that he cared for the Poor, but because he was a Thief, and had the Bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, let her alone, against the Day of my Burying hath she kept this. For the Poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always.

THIS Portion of Scripture may perhaps be judged not so proper and suitable for this Day, as many other

other Scriptures which might have been made choice of. But I have so often Discourfed of that Subject which this Season and Occasion minds us of, that I scarce know what to add more on that Argument, than what I have already spoken. Besides, 'tis not necessary that I should always treat of those Scriptures that would confine me to speak of that Subject only. There will be something of that Nature before I have done; and those other matters which this Scripture will offer to our Consideration, may be as beneficial to us, unless we be wanting to our selves, by neglecting to apply and improve them. The words may be resolved into these three parts.

1. They give us an account of a very remarkable action of *Mary*. *Then took Mary a pound of Oyntment, of Spicknard, very costly, and anointed the Feet of Jesus, and wiped his Feet with her Hair, and the House was filled with the Odour of the Oyntment.*

2. We have a Narration of the offence that *Judas* took at this her action, and the exception that he made against it. *Then saith one of his Disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's Son, which should betray him, why was*

not

not this Oyntment Sold for Three Hundred Pence and given to the Poor ? This he said, not that he cared for the Poor, but because he was a Thief, and had the Bag, and bare what was put therein.

3. We have our Saviours Defence and Vindication of Mary, or his Apology for her. Then said Jesus, let her alone, against the Day of my Burying hath she kept this. For the Poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always. Of these Parts in Order as they stand in the Text.

And 1. Concerning Mary's Action. Then took Mary a Pound of Oyntment, &c. 'Tis Questioned whether this were not that Woman concerning whom we Read, Luke 7. 37. Which washed Christs Feet with her Tears, and wiped them with the Hairs of her Head, and kissed his Feet. Some have thought this Mary and that Woman to be the same, in regard the Action of the one agrees with that of the other, in some circumstances. But whether she was another Woman, or the same mentioned by St. Luke, this we are sure of, that her action was highly pleasing and acceptable to Christ; for besides the Defence he made for her, he adds, as 'tis recorded by the other

ther Evangelists, that this her action should in Honour of her be transmitted to all succeeding Generations. *Verily I say unto you, saith he, wheresoever this Gospel shall be Preached in the whole World, there shall also this that this Woman hath done, be told for a Memorial of her, Matth. 26. 13. And so again Mark 14. 9.*

Now if you ask what it was that did so highly commend this Action to the acceptance of Christ; I answer, it was her great Love to him, thus overflowing, and discovering it self in Expressions of an extraordinary nature. The fervency and height of her Love, put her upon such high ways of expressing it. She thought she could never do enough in manifesting the ardency of her Affection towards him, whom she so dearly loved. Wherefore,

1. She sticks not to bestow and spend upon him a Box of Oyntment, which *Judas* valued at Three Hundred Pence; yea, at more than Three Hundred Pence, as another Evangelist informs us, *Mark 14. 5.* Neither did *Judas* over-value the Oyntment: *Pliny* tells us, that a Box of the best sort of that Oynt-

Oyntment, such as this is said to have been, (for *St. Matthew* and *St. Mark* report it to have been very precious, and *St. John* very costly) I say, *Pliny* tells us that a Box of the best sort of that kind of Oyntment, was sold for Three Hundred and Ten Pence ; that is, *Roman* Pence, not such as ours are ; which according to the Learned *Budæus* his computation, amounts to Fifty Pounds of *French* Money. A great Sum to be expended, and poured out at once upon a Man's Body. But sincere and great Love is not niggardly, but bountiful. It cannot endure to run in a low and shallow stream, but in a full current ; it delights to rise above the Channel, and overflow the Banks upon special and extraordinary Occasions.

2. She poured it out upon his Head, says *St. Matthew* and *St. Mark* ; she anointed his Feet with it, saith *St. John*. There is no contradiction or inconsistency in these several Narrations ; she anointed both his Head and his Feet, though both are not mentioned by the same Evangelists. *St. Matthew* and *St. Mark* reporting, that she poured the Oyntment on his Head, do not there-
by

by deny that she also anointed his Feet; and St. *John* affirming that she anointed his Feet with it, doth not thereby deny that she also poured it on his Head. Her great Love was not satisfied with having poured it on his Head, unless she had also anointed his Feet. Neither did the superlative redundancy of her Affection to her Saviour stay there; she moreover wiped his Feet with the Hair of her Head. Great Love thinks no Expression full enough, no Condescension low enough, to discover it self by. O how full of Love to her dearest Lord and Saviour was this holy Woman! And how little Love to him have we! She thinks nothing too much to be laid out upon him; how many may there be amongst us who think nothing too little for him? She is most freely willing to bestow Pounds upon him at once; we can hardly afford him so many Pence. She makes account nothing is better bestowed than what is spent upon Christ: many of us may be apt to judge it Money thrown away, saying with *Judas*, and those other Disciples whom he had leavened, *To what purpose is this waste?* Matth. 26. 8.

And

And so much concerning *Mary's* Action : So much I mean as I shall say of it in this place ; but there will be occasion of speaking a little more of it anon, when I come to speak of our Saviour's Apology for her.

I now go on to the Second Thing considerable in the words, namely, the Offence that *Judas* took at *Mary's* Action, and the Exception which he made against it : *Then saith one of his Disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this Oynement sold for Three Hundred Pence, and given to the Poor ? This he said, not that he cared for the Poor, but because he was a Thief, and had the Bag, and bare what was put therein.* In these words we have several Things.

First, A Description of the Person that took Offence at what *Mary* had done. *Then saith one of his Disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him.*

Secondly, The Exception that he took at *Mary's* Action, and the pretended Ground or Reason thereof : *Why was not*

not this Oyntment sold for Three Hundred Pence, and given to the Poor?

Thirdly, The true Reason of his excepting against her Action: This he said, not that he cared for the Poor, but because he was a Thief, and bare the Bag, and what was put therein. I shall speak a little of every of these.

And *First*, of the Description of the Person that took Offence at *Mary's* Action, and excepted against it. In the Description there are four Characters by which he is set forth.

I. He is said to have been one of *Christ's Disciples*. A Disciple he was that had learnt little from his Master's Teaching and holy Example. And such Disciples of *Christ* there are, and ever will be, in the visible Church. No Congregation or Society of Christians is without such as professing themselves to be Followers and Disciples of *Christ*, refuse to be taught or governed by him; such as would have a name that they live, but are dead, *Rev. 3. 1.* who profess that they know God, but in their works they deny him, *Tit. 1. 16.* If there were one such in *Christ's* own
retinue

retinue that consisted but of Twelve Persons; what Society of Christians can pretend to that Purity, as to have no such Mixture. The Church Triumphant consists of such only as are true Saints, but the Church Militant is made up of sincere Christians and Hypocrites, Wise Virgins and Foolish, *Matth. 25. 2.* Good and Bad, Tares and Wheat, *Matth. 13. 29, 30.*

But how is it that St. *John* here Reports one of Christ's Disciples to have taken this offence at *Mary*, whereas St. *Matthew* chargeth more of them with it. When his Disciples saw it, saith he, they had Indignation, saying, to what purpose is this waste? *Matth. 26. 8.* And so St. *Mark* much to the same effect, *Mark 14. 4.* There were some that had Indignation within themselves. But this difference of the Evangelists is easily reconciled. *Judas* it seems was he that first began to take offence at *Mary*, and then some of the rest of the Disciples did the like: and *Judas* from a wicked Principle; from his Covetous and Thievish Disposition; but the other Disciples as we may Charitably suppose, in the simplicity of their Hearts, and with no ill meaning. Wherefore though the

Two other Evangelists mention the Disciples, yet St. *John* names *Judas*, and him only, because he was the principal Offender, and chiefly to be blamed.

The next Character of the Person that took offence at *Mary*, follows; *Judas Iscariot*; *Iscariot* is added no doubt to distinguish him from another *Judas*, namely *Judas the Brother of James, another of the Twelve Disciples*, Luke 6. 16. who was the same with *Lebbeus surnamed Thaddeus*, Matth. 10. 3. But why this *Judas* should be called *Iscariot* is uncertain. I might be large in rehearsing the several conjectures of Learned Men concerning it; but it would scarce be worth the while to do it, and therefore I forbear to trouble you with them.

The third Character given him is, that he was *Simons Son*; and by this again he was distinguished from the other *Judas*. What is here said of him was ignominious and reproachful, and therefore by all these Characters the Evangelist provides that the reproach might stick to the Person to whom it did belong, and not by any mistake light upon another. Whence we may learn how careful we ought to be, as at any time there may be just
cause

cause of reporting things of a reproachful Nature, so to distinguish Persons, as the innocent may not suffer. Through want of the Evangelists exact care this way, it often comes to pass that the miscarriages of one Person are ascribed to another, and in common Fame which stays not to enquire into things, and examine them, he often suffers most that least deserved it, or perhaps that did not at all deserve it.

The Fourth and Last Character is, that it was he that should betray Christ, and afterwards did. A Character very pertinently and seasonably added in this place ; to intimate to us by what steps and degrees of Wickedness he at length proceeded to act that horrid and execrable Villany. The Devil made Choice of a fit Instrument to be employed in that his Service ; he made use of one whom he had been long a Training up for such a Diabolical employment. He had taught him to play the Thief already, and that qualified him to play the Traytor in the end. For the same bitter Root of Covetousness that disposed him to the one, put him upon the other. Had it not been for his inordinate Love of Money, he had

neither been a Thief nor a Traytor. This fearful experiment in *Judas* of the fatal issues of Covetousness, whom it at length hurried on to the Commission of that horrid Crime of betraying his Master the Lord of Glory; the guilt of which Sin filled his Conscience with such Horrour as made him his own Executioner, that he might go to his own Place; I say this fearful experiment in *Judas* of the fatal Issues of Covetousness, should Caution all who find themselves addicted to that Sin, to set themselves against it, and use their utmost endeavours for the mortifying of it, least it prove their Ruin in the end as it did his.

And so I have done with the Characters of the Person that took offence at *Mary*.

In the Second place follows the exception that he took at *Marys* Action, together with the pretended Reason thereof. *Why was not this Ointment Sold for Three Hundred Pence and given to the Poor?* *Judas* put on the Vizard of Charity, and would be thought to have a great deal of Care and Solitude for the supply of the Wants and Necessities of the Poor: And that it grieved him to the Heart to see such waste of what might

might fill so many empty Bellies, and Cloath so many Naked Backs : A very likely thing that such a Covetous Wretch as he was, should so highly concern himself with the Poor, and so much take it to Heart, that such lavish and profuse expence should be needlessly made in an empty and fruitless Ceremony, while the Poor were pinched with cold and starved with Hunger. How much, think you, would he have given out of his own Purse towards their relief ? Not one Penny we may be confident of, and yet this is the Man that would appear to have so much tenderness and compassion for them. And are there not too many in the World like him ? Are there not many who can make shew of much Affection and Compassion towards the distressed so far as good words will go, but when it comes to it that something is to be done for the Poor, they draw back, and look another way ? Are there not those who would seem to shew a great deal of Zeal for the Poor in blaming other Mens backwardness, but will do nothing themselves ? They are not good words, and fair flourishes, and empty Professions of a compassionate Sense of the wants and exigencies of the

distressed that are acceptable to God, but Love unfeigned, and sincere compassions, and the Truth and Sincerity of these really manifested by such Deeds of Charity as may afford them seasonable and effectual Succour and Relief.

So from the pretended grounds of *Judas* his exceptions against *Marys* Action, I come to the true Reason thereof, in the next words, *This he said, not that he cared for the Poor, but because he was a Thief, and had the Bag, and bare that which was put therein.* A Charitable regard of the Poor was pretended by him, but his own private advantage, and the satisfying of his own Covetousness was intended. He bare the common purse for Christ and his Disciples, out of which he was wont to purloyn for himself, driving on a Trade of Thieving; and so the more came into the Bag, the more might he Thievishly detract thence and put into his own Pocket without being discovered. It was not the filling of the Poors Bellies, but his own Purse that he had so much Zeal for. *Judas* never learn'd these Arts from his Master; but many have learn'd them from him, or from the Devil who was his Teacher. Religion,
and

and Piety, and Charity, Zeal for God's Glory, and Zeal for the good of Men is often held forth, but other matters are designed. Religion is only taken up and made use of as a Cloak to cover Mens vicious Practices, or to help them to carry on their ungodly designs so much the more secretly and successfully. But God will have a time to unmask all such Notorious Hypocrites, that their Rottenness may appear unto all Men. They so carry the matter as if they might safely mock God; *but God is not mocked*, saith the Apostle, Gal. 6. 7. that is, he neither will nor can be mocked, and so much they shall know to their cost, when he comes to lay Judgment to the Line and Righteousness to the Plummets, and to give unto every Man according as his works shall be. Then it shall appear that Christ hath not in vain pronounced so many Woes against Hypocrites, Matth. 23. Nor in vain threatned wicked and unfaithful Servants, with the Doom and Punishment of Hypocrites, saying, *the Lord of that Servant shall come in a Day when he looketh not for him, and in an Hour when he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his Portion with*

Mat. 24.
50, 51.

Hypocrites. And why with Hypocrites rather than with any other sort of Sinners? Surely because they of all others shall be most dreadfully punished.

And this might have sufficed to have been spoken concerning the Reason, the true Reason of *Judas* his exception against *Mary*: but that there is a Question that may here be moved, which I shall briefly touch. If *Judas* were a Thief, as here he is said to have been, and if Christ knew him to be so, as being God he could not but know it, how is it that he intrusts him with the Bag rather than any other of his Disciples whom he knew to be faithful?

Ans. 1. Christ knew him though Thievish and unfaithful, to be in some respects fittest for this employment. He was most unfit for better Employment, and for an higher Trust.

2. The rest of his Disciples were qualified for higher Employment, and were not to be incumbred or distracted with the things of the World farther than there was a necessity; and there was no necessity here where there was another to undertake that mean Service.

3. Christ

3. Christ as God was not obliged as we are, to entrust those only who are Faithful. He often commits the keeping and the dispensing of the things of this World to those whom he knows to be such as will make an ill use of them, and carry themselves very unfaithfully in managing the Trust committed to them. He hath an absolute, incontrollable and Sovereign Power as being the High Possessor of Heaven and Earth, to dispose of the things of this World into what Hands he pleaseth, neither is it for any of us to object against his Providence therein, or to say unto him, *what dost thou?* as *Job* speaketh, *Job. 9. 12.* Several things we may hence learn, As

1. That no Man ought to conclude himself to be beloved of God, and one of his Favourites, because God hath thought fit to entrust him with much of these Earthly things. God often commits the Bag and the bearing of the Purse to those that are no better than *Judas* was.

2. Let no Man eagerly pursue these things, or Covet to graspe as much of the World as he can, seeing these are not the things from which any Man may
take

take measure of Gods special Love to him. If *Judas* had thought himself more intirely beloved of his Master than the rest of the Disciples, because he trusted him with the Bag, he had been much mistaken. This is a Trust of that Nature that God more often puts it into the Hands of his Enemies than of his Friends.

3. Men may also hence learn how to value themselves and others, that is to say, not according to the largeness of their Trust in these Temporal things, but as God hath been pleased more or less to intrust them with the true Riches. Grace is the best Standard, according to which Men may weigh and Rate themselves and others. And so much to that Question.

2. But why was *Judas* marked with the infamous Brand of a Thief, for having sometimes transferred to his own use some part of what was in the Bag. It was put into his Hands, he did not secretly filch or steal from any Man. And it was put into his Hands for his own use, as well as for the use and necessary supplies of Christ and the other Disciples. Why therefore should he upon that account

count be stigmatized with the odious Name of a Thief?

Ans^w. He very well deserved that odious Name. For though he was to have his share of the Money that was put into the Bag, though his wants were thence to be supplied as well as the wants of the rest, yet it was never intended that above the necessary supply of his wants he should secretly take from the Bag or common Treasury to fill his own Purse. This was such a violation of the Trust committed to him as was no better than plain Theft: And such a Theft as whereby not only his Master and the rest of his fellow Disciples were injured, but the Poor also, who by Christs Order were upon occasion relieved out of the Bag when there was any thing to spare. So this Notorious Hypocrite that made shew of so much Zeal for the Poor was himself one that Robbed the Poor, and had no other or better intentions than to Rob them, in his pretended Zeal for them. Take notice of this you, if any such be here, who being trusted for others, make bold to serve your own Turns out of the trust committed to you. The Devil may tell you this is no Theft because

cause you only take of what was put into your Hands, and you had Possession of. But flatter not your selves, neither suffer the Devil to delude you. In Gods account 'tis not only Theft, but one of the worst kinds of Theft, in which besides Thievery there is also the betraying and violation of a Trust. To Thieve or Steal from any Man is an high offence, but to Thieve from those for whom you are intrusted, is Treachery and Unfaithfulness complicated with Thievery. And yet farther, if the Poor be those for whom you are intrusted, and you wrong them and deprive them of what was intended for them, there is an addition of Cruelty and Unmercifulness to Thievery and Unfaithfulness. Wherefore it highly concerns you that are intrusted with the Charity of Benefactors, to see that nothing committed to you be diverted or transferred to any other uses than those for which it was designed; and especially that no part thereof be transferred to any Mans own private advantage; this were Theft, and Unfaithfulness and Cruelty wrapt up together; than all which Meeting in the same Sin, what could there be to render it more exceeding Sinful, or to give it the highest aggra-

aggravations, that a Sin of that Nature is capable of?

So from *Judas* his exceptions against *Mary*, I come to Christ's Apology for her, or his Defence of her. *Then said Jesus, let her alone, against the Day of my Burying hath she kept this. For the Poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always.* In this our Saviour's Defence of her, we have

1. His Charge to *Judas* and the rest not to give her any disturbance by taking exceptions against what she had done; *Then said Jesus, let her alone.*

2. We have a double Reason of this Charge; the first of which is taken from the suitableness of her Action to his approaching Death and Burial; *Against the Day of my Burying hath she kept this.* The second Reason is drawn from the seasonableness of *Mary's* Action in regard that he was now shortly to leave this World, and then there would no longer be any place for such Testifications of her Respects to him, and the Honour she had for him. *For the Poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always.* Of these very briefly.

1. Our

I. Our Saviour Chargeth *Judas* and the rest not to give her any disturbance. Then said *Jesus*, *let her alone*. Saint *Matthew* and *St. Mark* express Christ's Charge unto them more fully, thus, *Why trouble ye the Woman, she hath wrought a good work upon me*. 'Tis a trouble indeed, a great trouble to good Men to have their best actions ill resented, and causeless exceptions made against them. But this measure we must often expect to meet with in this World. The greater part of Men are neither so Wise nor so Charitable as to judge aright of things, and to make such constructions of them as they ought. It was *Mary's* Case to have her actions in which she expressed greatest Love to her Saviour, misunderstood, and ill taken; and if it be sometimes your Case also, wonder not at it, nor suffer your self to be disquieted or discomposed by it. Let it satisfy you that you have acceptance with God in what is well done, though you have not with Men. If Christ saith of you, as of *Mary*, *let her alone, she hath wrought a good work*, it matters not who are of another Mind. If he be pleased to manifest his Approbation and Acceptance of what you do, let Men censure you,

you, and clamour against you while they please. In the mean time they must know that they shall have no thanks from Christ that give causeless trouble to any of his Servants upon what pretence soever, yea though their pretences should be as seemingly Pious and plausible as *Judas* his pretences here in the Text were. So much concerning our Saviour's Charge for giving *Mary* no disturbance, *Let her alone.* The first Reason which he subjoyns is taken, as hath been said, from the suitableness of her action to his Death and Burial approaching. *Against the Day of my Burying hath she kept this.* Which we may not so understand as if it were indeed by *Mary* so intended. It was rather God's design and intention therein than *Mary's.* He foresaw that she would not have an opportunity of performing that Office to his Dead Body because his Resurrection would prevent it, and therefore he intended that this her anointing his Living Body before-hand should be instead of it. Thus to shew his great acceptance of this Office of so great Love, he puts a better construction upon it than she intended. O how good and kind

kind a Master do we serve who thus
resents and interprets our most weak
and imperfect Services! O that we had
but a little of his Kindness and Good-
will! If we had but a little of it, we
would make better and more favourable
constructions of Mens actions than many
times we do. Then instead of blasting
the good actions of others, we would
make just and seasonable Apologies for
them as he did for *Mary's*, and defend
them against the contradictions and gain-
sayings, the malignant glosses, and sini-
ster interpretations of evil-minded and
disaffected Persons. Certain it is that
Charity obligeth us to do it, and so far
as we neglect it, we fall short of the
discharge of our Duty.

There is one thing more which it
may not be amiss to take notice of by
the way, before I dismiss this first Rea-
son of our Saviours Charge for not giv-
ing any trouble or disturbance to *Mary*;
and 'tis the mildness and moderation of
Christ's Language and Carriage towards
Judas though he knew him to be a
Thief, and such a one as would shortly
become a Traytor. All that Christ saith
is this, *let her alone, against the Day of*
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my Burial bath she kept this : or why trouble ye the Woman, she hath wrought a good work upon me. He discovers not the secret Wickedness, Hypocrisie and Covetousness which he knew to be in Judas his Heart ; he saith no more to him than he doth to the rest ; *Let her alone, why trouble ye the Woman ?* O how many amongst us upon the like occasion, and especially in a case where their own respect and Honour was concern'd, as Christ's was in this action of *Mary* ; I say how many amongst us would have ript up all that they knew by him, would have called him Hypocrite, and Covetous Muck-worm, and Thief, and Pick-Purse, and what not. Let us all learn Moderation and Forbearance from our Saviour, speaking no more of the faults of others, especially of their secret faults known only to our selves than is absolutely necessary ; and not please our selves and gratifie those with whom we converse by speaking all the Evil we know or causelessly firme against them. This is a very Evil and Sinful Practice, and very ill becoming those who profess themselves to be the Disciples and Followers of Christ. And so I come to the second

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Reason of his Charge for giving *Mary* no trouble, drawn from the seasonableness of the Office of Love she had performed to him, in regard the time drew near when he was to leave this World : *For the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always.* Christ is not against the Relief of the Poor ; that's a Duty which he often enjoined and pressed, but he would have every thing done in its Season. There would still be opportunities enough of doing good to the Poor, but not of performing such Offices to Himself. He was now shortly to ascend up into Heaven ; he should no longer be here on Earth as to his Bodily Presence ; and then no such expressions of Love and Honour as related to his Body and Corporeal Presence could be made. *Marys* action therefore was not only good in it self, but most seasonable. She testified her Love to Christ now while she had the opportunity of doing it, which shortly she must be deprived of by Christs withdrawing his Corporeal Presence and returning to his Father. Hence we may learn these two things,

I. That

1. That it behoves us not only to see that our actions be good in themselves; but likewise that they be seasonable. The season of a good action adds Beauty and Lustre to it: But a good action done out of season is almost spoiled, if not altogether. It's possible that an action good in it self may be so very unseasonable, that the very circumstance of Time may make it then cease to be good, and become Sinful; as if now in the Church you should be Reading a Chapter, or Discourfing of Good Things with your Pew-fellow while you should be giving attention to the Sermon.

2. Another thing which we may hence learn is, That when we either foresee or have reason to believe we shall not long enjoy the opportunities of doing or receiving good which at present we have, we must be so much the more careful to improve them. This was *Mary's* commendation, that being shortly to be deprived of Christ's Bodily Presence, she was careful to perform those Offices of Love and Honour to him, which after a little while she should not in that way be in a capacity of performing.

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The Tenth Sermon.

There now remains only one thing more to be spoken to, and I shall presently have done. *The Poor ye have always with you, and you may do them good whensoever ye will,* as 'tis added in *St. Mark*, It is by the Appointment, Ordination, and Disposal of Divine Providence that there should be in all Places several Ranks and Orders of Men; some Poor and some Rich, some that have very little of these Temporal good things, and some that have abundance. Though the Land of *Canaan* had a Promise of Gods special and extraordinary Blessing above all other Lands, yet even of that place God said, *The Poor shall never cease out of the Land*, Deut. 15. 11. And there are several Reasons for this Economy or Dispensation of Providence, of which these are some.

1. It hath seemed good to the Wisdom of God that there should be in all places Poor as well as Rich, or that you should always have the Poor with you, as our Saviour speaks, that there might be always and every where Objects unto which the Charity of the Rich might be extended, and on which it might be exercised.

2. That

2. That the wants and strait condition of the Poor might commend God's Bounty and Goodness to the Rich.

3. That in the Poor the Graces of Contentation and Humble Submission to the good pleasure of God, and of dependance on Gods Providence for their Daily Bread, might be acted and manifested.

4. God would have some to be in a low, mean Estate, and indigent Condition, that in them it might appear, how little Nature might be satisfied and contented with, and how comfortably Men might live upon a very slender allowance ; and how intollerable the excess and Luxury of others is who live so high, and devour so much of the best that can be had, and yet are not contented neither.

5. The Wisdom of God hath placed some in a poor and low condition to fit them for, and make them willing to undertake those mean Services and Employments without which the Rich could not subsist. These are some of the Reasons of this difference among Men in outward things. Now this being the Constitution and Appointment of God, that you should always have the Poor with you ; and

there being so much Wisdom in this various distribution of Temporal things ; and there being such weighty Reasons for it, and great ends of it ; let all, even the Poor as well as the Rich, be well pleased with this different Dispensation of the things of this Life, and let them both acknowledge and Adore the Wisdom of God therein. And Finally, let all, both Rich and Poor, Conscientiously discharge the Duties belonging to their respective Stations and Conditions. Let not the Poor Envy or Malign the Rich ; and let not the Rich Despise or Oppress the Poor : Let the Poor be contented with their mean condition, and not think God deals hardly with them because he gives them no more ; and let the Rich acknowledge Gods most Free and undeserved Bounty to them, make a Sober and Temperate use of their Plenty, and a Charitable use of their superfluities ; let not the Poor scorn to be beholden to the Rich, and let not the Rich grudge to be helpful to the Poor. In a word, let all, both Rich and Poor, remember that the time of their continuance here is short, and the Day is hastening when all distinctions and distances between High and Low, Rich and Poor, Noble and
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and Ignoble shall be taken away, when all the World shall be levelled, and when all must stand together upon even Ground before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, to receive their final and irrevocable Sentence according to what they have done in the Body whether it be good or bad ; and therefore let us all in our several Ranks and Places endeavour so to demean our selves here, as we may then give up our Account to the Judge of all the World with Joy and not with Grief, and be admitted into that Kingdom where neither the Rich have admittance for their Riches, nor the Poor are excluded for their Poverty.

SERMON XI.

Isaiah 26. 4.

*Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the
Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength.*

SEEING these Words contain a perfect and intire Sense in themselves, it is not needful to trouble our selves about the coherence of them. An exact enquiry into the context might occasion the discussing of some difficulties which would take up some time, and when all is done be of very little use, as affording no Light at all to the Text, which cannot easily be made plainer than it is. In the words we have, as you see, a Duty enjoined, together with an Encouragement thereunto. *Trust in the Lord for ever*, that's the Duty. *For in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength*, that's the Encouragement to the Duty. That which I purpose chiefly to

to insist on, is the great Duty of trusting in God; and as for the Encouragement, I shall only make use of it and improve it as a Motive to the performance of the Duty, when I shall come to the Application. In treating of this Subject I shall

1. Endeavour to shew what it is to trust in God.

2. What are the Grounds of our trusting in God.

3. What the Properties of Trust in God are.

4. What are the most proper Seasons for exercising and acting Trust in God.

5. What are the underminers and weakeners of our Trust.

6. I shall make Application of what shall have been spoken. I begin with the first of these, which was to shew what it is to Trust in God. To trust in God is nothing else but to depend on him for what we are concerned in. Now our concernments being Spiritual and Temporal, our dependance in God relates to both of them. The Nature of trust in God is best understood by those various expressions whereby in the Holy Scriptures the Nature of it is set forth unto us.

1. In Scripture Trust in God is sometimes expressed by our relying on God.

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So 2 Chron. 13. 18. the Children of Judah under the Reign of Abijah are said to have prevailed over the Israelites, because *they relied upon the Lord God of their Fathers.* So Asa and his People are said to have overcome the *Æthiopians* and *Lubims*, though a huge Host, because *Asa relied on the Lord;* 2 Chron. 16. 8.

2. Trusting in God is sometimes expressed by resting on him. Thus Asa professing and pleading his trust in God; saith, *Lord it is nothing with thee to help whether with many or with them that have no Power; help us O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy Name we go against this multitude,* 2. Chron. 14. 11. So Psalm 37. 7. *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.* Rest in the Lord, that is, trust in him, depend on him.

3. Trusting in God is sometimes expressed by staying our selves on God. So Psalm 18. 18. *They prevented me in the Day of my Calamity, saith David, but the Lord was my Stay.* So Isaiah 26. 3. *Thou shalt keep him in perfect Peace whose Mind is stayed on thee, because he trusted in thee.* And Isa. 50. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the Voice of his Servant, that walketh*

The Eleventh Sermon.

*walketh in Darknes, and hath no Light?
Let him trust in the Name of the Lord,
and stay upon his God.*

4. Trusting in God is sometimes expressed by looking unto God ; that is, by looking unto him for help. So *Psal. 34. 5. They looked unto him and were lightned, and their Faces were not ashamed.* So *Isa. 45. 22. Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else.* And *Micah 7. 7. Therefore will I look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation.* So also is our trust in God expressed by having our Eyes upon him. When there was a Combination of several Nations against *Jehoshaphat* and his People, *We have no might,* said he, *against this Company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee,* 2. *Chron. 20. 12. Our eyes are upon thee,* that is, our Trust is in thee, and all our expectation of relief is from thee. Thus we see how many ways our trusting in God is expressed and set forth in Scripture ; namely, by our relying on him, by our resting on him, by our staying our selves on him, by our looking to him, and having our Eyes upon him. By all this variety of expressions

expressions one and the same thing is intended and signified ; that is to say our dependance on him for that help, or for those supplies in any kind which we stand in need of.

But yet by way of further explication of the Nature of trusting in God, I shall here shew, that trust in God is a Grace wrought in the Heart by the Spirit of God ; and that to trust in God is a Duty incumbent on us ; and a Duty that is in great account with God.

1. Trust in God is a Grace wrought in the Heart by the Spirit of God. Our Hearts are Naturally void of it. By Nature we are carried to rely on the Creature, and to have our dependance on it. *We forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew out to our selves cisterns, broken cisterns that will hold no water,* as God complains of the *Jews*, *Jer.2.13.* 'Tis therefore the work of God upon the Heart, and a great work it is to take it off from the Creature, and to fix its trust and dependance on God. No Man that hath any acquaintance with his own Heart, can be ignorant how hard a matter it is to trust in God, especially in cases of extremity and danger.

2. 'Tis

2. 'Tis our Duty to trust in God. 'Tis not only a great and singular privilege to trust in God, but a Duty required of us in the First Commandment. As that Commandment requires us to acknowledge God, to own him for our God, to Fear him, to Love him, to Delight in him, so likewise doth it require of us to trust in him. Hence it is that we are so often enjoined to Trust in him. So here in the Text ; *Trust in the Lord for ever.* So Prov. 3. 5. *Trust in the Lord with all thy Heart, and lean not to thine own Understanding.* So Psal. 37. 3. *Trust in the Lord and do good.* And verse the 5th. of the same Psalm, *Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Trust in him at all times, ye people.* Psal. 62. 8. and so in many other places. And hence also it is that trust in the Creatures is forbidden, and severely threatened. *Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help,* Psal. 146. 3. *Trust not in uncertain riches,* 1 Tim. 6. 17. *Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord,* Jer. 17. 5.

3. Trust

3. Trust in God is a Duty that is in great account with God. The great account which God makes of this Duty may appear divers ways.

As 1. From the high commendation that was given unto *Hezekiah* in respect of this Grace, 2 Kings 18. 5. *He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that none after him was like him among all the Kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.*

2. From the many Promises that are made to trust in God, Promises of Safety and Protection from Dangers, of deliverance out of Trouble, of Direction and Counsel in our perplexities, of Success in our Affairs and Undertakings, of Relief in our Necessities, and the like; divers of which Promises I shall have occasion of mentioning afterwards.

3. They are pronounced blessed that trust in God. *Psal. 34. 8. Psal. 40. 4. Psal. 84. 11. Jer. 17. 7, 8.*

4. By trust in God we give him the Glory of his Attributes, of his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and Truth. As for Example, he that in his dangers and extremities trusteth in him for Protection and Deliverance, acknowledgeth his Power to be such, as that he is able to
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protect and deliver, and his Wisdom to be such, as he knows how to do it ; and his Goodness to be such, as that he is most graciously inclined and ready to do it. And lastly, his Truth to be such, as that 'tis impossible he should fail to make good whatsoever Promises he hath made to protect and safe-guard his People in all their dangers, and to deliver them out of all their troubles. Upon all these accounts it is, that trust in God is a Grace which he much looks after and esteems.

And this may suffice to have been spoken concerning the Nature of trusting in God.

I come now to speak something concerning the Grounds of our trusting in God, which was the Second particular to be spoken of. Now the Grounds of our trusting in God, are,

i. His Power : He is Omnipotent, most able to Help, Succour, and Relieve us whatever our distresses, difficulties or dangers may be. *Power belongeth to him*, Psal. 62. 11. To him it peculiarly appertains. He hath an Eminency, a Transcendency of Power in and of himself, his Power is Infinite and Irresistable : and he is the Fountain

tain and Original of all Power; whatever Power is to be found in any of the Creatures is derived from him. Wherefore there is no Case so full of danger or difficulty, but there is a sufficiency of Power in him to relieve us. He is able to do for his People exceeding abundantly above all that they can ask or think, Eph. 3. 20. This Gods Power *Joseph* had in his Eye, and encouraged himself from, and pleaded in Prayer to God in a time of great danger and distress, 2 Chron. 20. 6. O Lord God of our Fathers, said he, art not thou God of Heaven, and rulest not thou over all the Kingdoms of the Heathen? And in thine Hand is there not Power and Might, so that none is able to withstand thee? And this Almighty, Irresistible Power of God is upon all occasions ingaged in the behalf of his People in their dangers and distresses. The Eyes of the Lord run too and fro throughout the whole Earth to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose Heart is perfect towards him, 2 Chron. 16. 9.

2. Another Ground of our trusting in God is his Wisdom. Our Condition is never, can never be so dangerous and difficult, so perplexed and intricate,

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but his Infinite Wisdom can easily find out and contrive a way for our escape and rescue, for our safety and protection. *He knows how to deliver the Righteous,* 2 Pet. 2. 9. Though we should be at a loss for relieving our selves, though all Men and Angels, all Created Wisdom should be at a loss to find out a way for helping us, yet the Infinite Wisdom of God can never be at a loss.

3. The goodness of God and his Gracious Inclinations to shew Mercy, are another ground of trusting in him. *He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. He delighteth in mercy.* Psal. 145. 9. *There is a multitude of tender Mercies in him. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* Micah 7. 18. Psal. 51. 1. Psal. 103. 13.

4. Another ground of trusting in God are his Gracious Promises, and his Truth and Faithfulness in making good those Promises. Many are those Gracious Promises which he hath made to his people in reference to their Afflictions and Distresses. *Call upon me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me. Because he hath set his love upon me therefore will I deliver him ; he shall call upon me, and I will answer him, I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver* Psal. 50. 15.

liver him and honour him ; with long life will I satisfie him, and shew him my salvation. When thou shalt pass through the waters I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee, *Isaiah 43. 2.* Now whatsoever promise God hath made to Support, Relieve, Comfort, and Deliver his distressed people ; he will Infalibly make good according to the true Intent, Import, and meaning of those promises. He is not a man that he should lye, neither the son of man that he should repent, *Numb. 23. 19. 1 Sam. 15. 29.* He is God that cannot lie, who hath promised, *Titus 1. 2.* All his promises are Yea and Amen, *2 Cor. 1. 20.*

And so much concerning the grounds of trusting in God. Now follows the third particular, namely that I should speak something of the Properties of trusting in God. Now here we must consider that any reliance on God is not the Grace that hath been described, is not that trust in God that is wrought in the Heart by the Spirit of God. There is a false and counterfeit trust in God, which is indeed a presumptuous reliance on him without sufficient war-

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The Eleventh Sermon.

rant. Such is the vain trust and presumptuous confidence of all Wicked Men. They were a very corrupt and ungodly people of whom the Prophet speaks. *Micah 3. 11, Their heads did judge for reward, and their prophets did prophesie for money ;* and if their Governours and Magistrates, their Prophets and Teachers were so bad, we may conclude that the people were little better. Yet as bad as they were they would *lean upon the Lord, and say, is not the Lord among us? No evil can come upon us.* Notwithstanding the wickedness of their Lives they trusted in God for their safety, and made account to be secured from all evil under the shadow of his protection. So that lewd and profligate people which would Steal, and Murther, and commit Adultery, and Swear falsely, and burn Incense unto *Baal*, and walk after other Gods, did however crie *the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,* relying on God for Protection, because they had his Temple, and Instituted Worship among them. But the Prophet tells them they *trusted in lying words,* they did but deceive themselves in expecting Protection from God whom they continually provoked to his Face
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by going on in their trespasses, *Jer. 7.*
 4. 8. 9. 'Tis therefore another kind of
 trust in God that I have been speaking
 of, a pious and well grounded trust in
 him and relyance on him ; which may
 be known by these Properties.

1. This Gracious trust in God is ever
 attended with Prayer. He that truly
 stays himself on God, and trusts in him,
 will frequently and earnestly recommend
 unto him in Prayer those things for
 which he trusteth in him. So the Wi-
 dow whom the Apostle describes, *1 Tim.*
5. 5. is one that trusteth in God, and
continueth in supplications and prayers
night and day. So also the Psalmist joyns
 trust in God and Prayer. *Trust in him* *Psal. 62. 8.*
at all times ye people, pour out your heart
before him.

2. They who trust in God will be
 careful to serve his Providence in the
 use of all good and lawful means for
 obtaining or compassing what they trust
 in him for.

So *Jacob* trusting in God for delive-
 rance from the fury of his Brother *Esau*,
 and Wrestling with God in Prayer for
 that Mercy, used the best means he could
 for pacifying the Wrath of his Brother,
 and disposeth of his Wives, Children

and Substance in such a manner as might best secure them, or some of them in case that *Eſau* should still persist in his displeasure against him, *Gen.* 32. So *Joſhua*, though God had promised him that he would by him drive out the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, and put his own People into possession of that Land; and that no Enemy should be able to stand before him all his days, *Joſh.* 1. 5, 6. And though he trusted in God for the performance of what he had promised him, yet he neglects no means that a Prudent and Valiant Commander could make use of, as we may see in the whole management of that War against the *Canaanites*.

Thus *St. Paul*, though he trusted in God for his Deliverance out of the hand of the Governour of *Damascus* who would have apprehended him, yet he provides for his escape by being let down by the Wall in a Basket, *2 Cor.* 11. 33. So again, *Acts* 27. Though he trusted for his own preservation, and the preservation of all the Persons in the Ship as God had promised, yet he is not against the lightening of the Ship by casting out into the Sea what could be spared; Nor against the Seamen casting themselves

themselves upon Planks and broken pieces of the Ship, and using all probable means for their getting safe to Land. To depend on God in the neglect of means is not to trust in him but to tempt him, whether it be in cases of Danger, or of Sicknes, or of Want, or any other concernment whatsoever.

3. As he that trusteth in God will make use of all lawful means, so he will not allow himself to make use of any unlawful means. He that trusts in God will not steal to supply his wants, will not lye to provide for his Family, not forswear and perjure himself to decline danger or suffering, will not have recourse to Witches or Wizzards in time of his distress, or the like. Our reaching forth the hand to make use of unwarrantable means for helping our selves, is ever an effect of our distrust of God's care of us, and gracious providence watching over us. And yet this is often done not only by wicked Men, as by *Saul* betaking himself to the Witch of *Endor*, 1 *Sam.* 28. 7. And by *Ahaziah* enquiring of the God of *Ekron*, 2 *Kings* 1. 2. But by good Men also sometimes, as by *Abraham* denying his Wife, *Gen.* 20. 2. And afterwards by *Isaac* offending

in the same kind, *Gen.* 26. 7. And the like infirmity did *David* upon several occasions discover ; particularly at *Nob* falsely pretending that he had been intrusted by the King with the managing of a secret business, *1 Sam.* 21. 1, 2, 3, 10. And at *Gath* feigning himself Mad, *1 Sam.* 21, 13, 14. So *St. Peter*, *Matth.* 26. 69. And *Gal.* 2. 11. 12. 13. But all this even in good Men, ever proceeded from weakness of Faith, and some degree of distrust of God's Providence, from which none are altogether free.

4. He that trusteth in God, so far as he trusteth in him, will not be cast down, overcome with Excessive and Predominant fears of future Evils, even when thick Clouds are gathering, and the face of things looks Black and Dismal. In such a Dark and Gloomy Day *he will not be afraid of evil tydings, for his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord*, *Psalms* 112. 7.

5. He that trusteth in God will not be much disturbed or dejected at disappointments. If the issue of his affairs be otherwise than he expected they would have been, he quiets himself, by considering,

(1.) That

(1.) That all things come to pass by God's Permission, and that 'tis by his Providence that he is so Disappointed.

(2.) That God can most easily turn all our Disappointments to our Advantage in the End ; and that there is nothing more usual in the course of his Wise and Gracious Providence, than to disappoint us for our Good.

6. Trust in God will make us willing to wait till God's own time for doing us good be fully come. As *he that believeth will not make haste.* So he that trusteth in God will not make haste. He knows that God's own Season is the best, and therefore he is contented to tarry for it, and doth not think the time long that he tarries. Isaiah 28.
16.

And so much concerning the Properties of trusting in God.

It now follows that in the Fourth Place I should speak something of the Seasons when this Grace is more especially to be Acted and Exercised. Trust in God is never out of Season. *Trust in the Lord at all times.* Psal. 62.8. In time of prosperity, and when all things go well with us, when we neither feel nor fear Adversity we are to trust in God. And than

than it is in some Respects most necessary that we should be careful to exercise this Grace, because than we are most apt to cast away our confidence in God, and to trust in the Creature making Flesh our Arm. To have an Arm of Flesh, and not to relye on it is a difficult matter. But yet the most proper Seasons for the Exercise of this Grace, are either when we fear great Evils may be comming upon us, or when we at present lye under the actual presures of them.

I. In times of great Fears and Dangers, it concerns us to Exercise trust in God. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee*, Psalm 56. 3. We are afraid when Dangers threaten us, when Creatures forsake us, when visible means are withdrawn from us, when Worldly supports begin to fail us, and what should we then do but look beyond and above all the Creatures, fix our Eyes on God, and place our confidence in him who is able to work with means or without means. This was that which *Asa* considered, and with which he encouraged himself to trust in God, when a huge Army was comming against them, and they had no proportionable strength to Encounter

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ter so Potent an Enemy as then opposed him. *Lord it is nothing with thee to help whether with many, or with them that have no power ; help us O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, 2 Chron. 14. 11.*

2. Another most proper season for the exercise of trust in God, is when at present we lye under the actual pressure of great Evils. Thus Job resolved to trust in God though he should kill him, *Job, 13, 15.* So the Three Children, *Dan. 3. 17. 18,* *Our God whom we serve, say they, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King : but if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the graven image which thou hast set up. And yet the Prophet Habakkuk in some Respects goes further, professing that he will not barely trust in God and depend on him in the most sad and disconsolate condition as to outward things, but rejoyce in him. Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stalls ; yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the*

the God of my salvation, Habakkuk 3. 17, 18.

So from the most proper Seasons for the Exercise of this Grace, our trust in God, and our dependance on him ; I come in the Fifth place, to add something concerning the Weakners and Underminers of our trust in God, and they are especially these Two.

(1.) The visible presence of outward means and helps, and the view of an Arm of Flesh to relye on. This draws off our hearts from God, and makes us relye on the Creature, and place our trust in it. It is the evil frame of our hearts to be ever leaning on Creature-props and supports, if we have them, and they be at hand, rather than on God.

(2.) Another thing that weakens and undermines our trust in God, is, our Consciouſness to our selves of our own guilt. When a Mans Conscience shall tell him, that in such and such ways he hath provoked God, and was never yet to any purpose humbled for it ; especially when his Conscience shall tell him that he doth still upon all occasions renew his provocations, and act over and over the same sins again, this makes him

him jealousie and distrustful of God whom he hath so provoked ; this makes him think he may not expect Relief and Succour from him in his Distresses, whose favour he hath so little regarded or valued ; But he that walketh uprightly and conscientiously, and studies in all things to please God and approve himself to him, will be able to commit himself to God, relye on him for seasonable and suitable help in every time of need, and trust in him. In a word, the strength and stedfastness of our trust and confidence in God depends very much upon the conscientious discharge of our Duty towards him. If we forsake him we will be apt to conclude that he will forsake us ; at least that he will so far forsake us as not to afford us that relief in our Distresses, which otherwise we might have expected from him. And this is no other than what he himself hath declared. *The Lord is with you while ye be with him ; if ye seek him he will be found of you ; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you,* 2 Chron. 15. 2.

So having spoken concerning the nature of trust in God ; the Grounds of it, the Properties of it, the most proper Seasons

Seasons for the Exercise of our trust in God, and concerning the Weakners and Underminers of our trust in God ; I come now to the Application.

Use 1. From what hath been said concerning our trusting in God, the Grounds of our trusting in him, the Obligation that lyes upon us to trust in him, it being a Duty incumbent on us, and a Duty that is in great account with God ; I say from all this and what else hath been delivered, we may be informed how great cause we have all to be humbled for our distrust, which upon all occasions we discover. 'Tis true, while we have before our Eyes, and in our View an Arm of Flesh, outward Supports, visible means of Relief in our Dangers and Distresses, and sensible Helps, our Spirits are Raised, our Confidences are heightened, and perhaps we think our trust in God to be strong and firm, to be stedfast and immoveable : but let those outward supports which bear us up and uphold us, be removed ; we are presently at a loss, we are dejected and dishearted, our Spirits sink and fall, and all our former confidence vanisheth. All which is an undeniable Argument,

Argument, a clear and pregnant Demonstration that we trusted more in the Creature than in God. Were it not so, our trust would not Ebb and Flow, Rise and Fall as outward means and carnal supports are before our Eyes, or withdrawn from our sight. They who trust in God purely, and not in the Creature, will trust in him at all times when he hides his face and withdraws the light of his countenance as well as when he is pleased to give them sensible Evidences and Manifestations of his Love and Favour ; as well in the absense of all outward means, as in the presence of them. But alas ! how jealous and suspicious are we of God's Love to us, how doubtful and diffident of his Intentions of doing us good ! How apt to pick matter of distrust out of all his providences, if he seem at any time but to step a little out of the way which we in our own thoughts had assigned him, and which we made sure account, and expected should have been the way in which he would have answered our desires and gratified us ! Now this our distrust is so much the more sinful, and so much the greater cause have we to be humbled for it, in regard of the Ag-
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gravations thereof; such as are these that follow.

1. That we cannot trust in God, notwithstanding all the Excellent, Stable, and Solid grounds of trusting in him which he hath given us.

2. Notwithstanding all that Experience which we have had of his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and Faithfulness.

3. That we cannot trust in him though he hath not only allowed us to trust in him at all times, in every Difficulty, Perplexity, Strait and Exigency of our Lives, but enjoined and commanded us to do it; and made it a special part of our Duty.

4. That we cannot trust in him and relye on him in reference to all our Concernments, though he hath been pleased to let us know that our trusting in him is highly acceptable to him, and that we honour him thereby, giving him the Glory of his Attributes; as on the contrary, our distrust of him is highly displeasing to him.

5. That we cannot trust in him though our own manifold experience hath taught us how causeless and groundless our distrust of him is, and though we have often found that he hath been best to

us, and dealt most Graciously with us, where our distrustful Fears and Jealousies have been greatest.

6. That we cannot trust in him tho' we have often smarted for our Distrust, Creating to our selves much Trouble and Disquiet, and perhaps bringing upon us those very Evils which we feared, and might have been exempted from if we had trusted in God, and quietly devolved our selves and our Concernments upon him. These Aggravations of our distrust as they heighten our Sin, so should they humble us so much the more for it. And so much concerning that first Use.

Use 2. Let us therefore be Exhorted to trust in God, to trust in him at all times, but especially when the Circumstances of our present Condition, are such as should ingage us thereunto; when 'tis evident, that our Exigencies are such that our Relief must be immediately from Heaven, there being no Creature in all the World which can do us any good.

Now to the end, we may be perswaded and prevailed with to put our trust

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in God, let us consider the great Benefits and Advantages of trusting in him.

I. Our trusting in God, ingageth him not to fail us in what we trust in him for. An Honest Man, a Man of common Ingenuity and good Nature, will not fail his Friend in that for which he trusts him and depends on him: much less will a Man of generous Principles do it. How then can it be that God should fail a Man that trusts in him? That trusts in him upon good Grounds, that trusts in him in a right manner, and as he ought to do. God never hath nor ever will fail them that so trust in him. Hence it is that God's People often urge their trusting in God, and plead it in their Prayers. And God himself allows of that Plea, and sometimes makes his Peoples trusting in him, the Ground of his Relieving them.

(I.) God's People are wont to Plead their trust in God, making use of it as an Argument to prevail with him in Prayer. *O my God, I trust in thee, let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. In thee is my trust, leave not my soul desolate. O my God, save thy Servant that trusteth in thee.*

Psal. 25.
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Psal. 141.
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Psal. 86.
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Help

Help us O Lord our God, for we reston thee. And so in many other places. 2 Chron. 14. 11.

(2.) God himself allows of this Plea, as appears in that he is said to help and deliver his Servants because they trust in him. So 'tis said of the *Reubenites*, the *Gadites*, and the half Tribe of *Manasseh*, that making War with the *Hagarites*, they were helped against them, and the *Hagarites* were delivered into their hands, and all that were with them, for they cryed to God in the battle, and he was intreated of them because they put their trust in him, 1 Chron. 5. 20. So *Hanain* the Seer told *Asa*, that God delivered the Huge Host of the *Ethiopi-ans* and *Lubims* into his hands, because he Relied on the Lord, 2 Chron. 16. 8. So God promised *Ebed-melech* that he would deliver him out of the hand of the Enemy, saying, thou shalt not fall by the sword because thou hast put thy trust in me, Jer. 39. 18.

(2.) Trust in God quiets the heart amidst all Fears and Dangers. Thus the *Psalmist* describes the Upright Man, saying, He shall not be afraid of evil tydings, for his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord. To the same effect is that of the Prophet *Isaiah*, Thou wilt keep him Psal. 112

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him in perfect peace; whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee, Isaiah 26. 3.

If it should be Objected, that many who trust in God are subject to many Distractions and much disquiet in time of Fears and Dangers; I Answer, that is from the Weakness and Imperfection of their trust in God. If their trust in God were such as it ought to be, Strong, Firm, and Stedfast, than their heart would be fixed and fortified against whatsoever might Discompose or Disquiet it.

(3). Another Benefit of trusting in God is, that it encourageth a Man to the diligent use of means for Effecting or Obtaining what he trusts in God for. Distrust weakens our Hands and discourageth our Endeavours, but our trust in God, puts Life and Vigour into them.

(4.) Trust in God also, procures a Blessing upon our Endeavours, and good Success to our Undertakings. In this Respect, as well as in other Respects it is, that the Man who trusts in God is so often in Scripture pronounced Blessed; as Blessed in his Person, so also in his Enterprizes and Undertakings: and on the other side he is said to be Cursed, that trusteth in any thing else but God, Jer. 17. 5.

(5.) Trust

(5.) Trust in God brings us within the Compass of many Gracious Promises. The Scripture is full of Promises made to Persons Endued and Qualified with this Grace. Divers of these Promises have been already mentioned, and more of them I shall have Occasion of mentioning hereafter, when I shall come to a more particular Application of what hath been delivered concerning this Subject.

Now 'tis an unspeable Benefit to be within the Verge of all those Promises; for such a one may Apply them and take the Comfort of them to himself upon all Occasions, as the Circumstances of his present Condition may require it. But he that is destitute of this Grace, hath nothing to do with those Promises, can take no Comfort in any of them, can derive no Strength, Support, or Relief from them, how much soever he may stand in need of it.

Now if any Man shall enquire how he may attain this Excellent Grace that is so Acceptable to God, and so Beneficial and Advantageous to him that is endued with it; I Answer,

1. He must Labour to see, be Sensible of, be Humbled for, and Bewail

the Want of this Grace, his Natural distrust of God, his Proneness to forsake God and relye on the Creature, and when that fails him to sit down discouraged, and to languish away under despair.

2. Let him be an humble Suter unto God for this Grace, and beg it of him by Earnest and Affectionate Prayer. How ready he is to bestow it upon them who duly seek it, our Saviour hath assured us, saying, *Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. For if ye being evil, know how to give good things unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly father give the holy spirit to them that ask him,* Luke 11. 9, 10, 13.

3. He must labour to be furnished with a Competent measure of sound Knowledge of God. *They that know* Psal. 9. 10. *thy name will put their trust in thee.* But as for such as are Grossly ignorant of God, 'tis impossible that they should trust in him.

4. They that would trust in God, must endeavour to get an Interest in him

him as their God. So the Church of God being assured of her Interest in God, could say, *this God is our God for ever and ever ; and he will be our guide unto death.* Thus when a Man can say with the Psalmist, *The Lord is my shepherd ;* he may also say further with him, *I shall not want.* He may trust in him for all needful Supplies. Psal. 48.
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Psal. 23.
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5. He that would trust in God, must be much in the thoughts of the Attributes of God, of his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and Truth ; of his Relation to him as a Father ; and of the many Gracious Promises that he hath made to his. These are the Grounds of our trusting in him ; and they are great Encouragements thereunto. The more we mind them and meditate on them, the more will our trust in God be Strengthened and Confirmed ; the more Confidently and Securely shall we be able to cast our Care on him.

6. He that would trust in God, must frequently Consult, call to Mind, and Recount his own manifold Experiences of God's dealing with him. He that shall often Reflect and Consider what God hath formerly been to him and done for him, can never want abundant

Encouragement to trust in God for the future, in all the Straits, Dangers, and Difficulties of his Life.

7. He that would trust in God, must Renounce all other Props and Supports, and trust in him alone. His Expectation of Safety, Succour, and Relief, must be from God only, as *David* professed his was, *Psalms* 62. 5, 6. This is to *trust in the Lord with all our heart*, as *Solomon* Counselleth, *Prov.* 3. 5. God will not allow us to divide our Trust between himself and any thing else ; he will not have the Creature to share with him in it.

8. He that would trust in God must walk Uprightly, and Endeavour in all things to please God, and keep a good Conscience. Wherefore the *Psalmist* joyns these together, *Offer unto God the sacrifice of righteousness, and put your* *Psalm* 4. 5. *trust in the Lord.* A Guilty Conscience will ever be apt to distrust God, and Harbour Jealousies of him. But an Upright Heart, and a Clear Conscience, will both Encourage and Enable a Man with much holy Security, to devolve Himself and his Concernments upon God, and trust in him. But of this before,

Having

Having hitherto made only a General Application of what hath been said concerning trust in God, I now come to descend to some Particulars, and these either with Relation to the Church for God, or to our selves.

1. Let us trust in God for what concerns the Church, committing the Safety and Protection thereof to him, whatever the Dangers or Distresses thereof may be. We are full of many Anxious and perplexing Fears when we consider the Rage and Malice, the Craft and Subtilty, the Unweariedness and Restlessness of the Churches Enemies ; and when we consider withal the many Advantages they have against the Church, partly from our own Divisions, mutual Animosities and Heart-burnings by which we are more disposed to fall upon one another and devour one another, than to unite against the common Enemy ; partly from the Strength and Unanimity of their Combinations and Confederacies at Home and Abroad ; and partly from the Immense and Boundless Liberty they take of making use of any, the most Horrid and Prodigious Artifices, to carry on their Designs ; whereas the Church of God in its highest Exigencies
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and most desperate Extremities, dares not, or should not dare to make use of any means to help it self, but such as are agreeable to the Rules and Doctrine of the Gospel. But in this Case let us have our Eyes upon Christ, who hath undertaken the Government and Protection of the Church. Let us trust him with the Interests and Concernments thereof. To consider that he sits at the Helm, that he directs and orders all the Affairs of his Church as to his Wisdom seemeth best; how should it allay our Troubles, assuage our Fears, and quiet our Minds! Christ is most Wise and Powerful, *his name is Counsellor, and the mighty God*, Isa. 9. 6. And as he wants neither Wisdom nor Power, so neither doth he want Love to his Church: If he had not loved it, he would never have laid down his Life for it, and purchased it with his own Blood. Let us therefore leave the managing of what concerns the Church, to his most Wise and Gracious Conduct and Disposal. If he seem to go on but Slowly and Leisurely in working out, and perfecting the deliverance of his Church; or if he seem to make use of such Methods and Expedients as to us seem strange,

strange, let us Remember that we ar^e are no Competent Judges of his deep Counsels, and that *his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out*, as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 11. 33.* He can bring Good out of Evil, Light out of Darkness, Order out of Confusion. He can make those things to be of greatest Advantage to his Church, which we thought did most threaten it. He can serve himself of those Providences for Promoting the Safety and Prosperity of his Church, which our Reason may judge to be more likely to Ruin it than to Preserve it. However things are therefore, let us still consider that nothing can fall out or come to pass without Christ's Permission, and that he would permit nothing to be but what his Wisdom judgeth most Expedient and most Conducible to the great ends of his Government, namely the good of his Church, and the Utter and Final Disappointment of all his and its Enemies in the Issue. Let this be well settled and fixed on our Hearts, and we shall be able to possess our Souls in Patience under every Dispensation of Divine Providence, how Dark and Cloudy soever it may seem to be. We are too
hasty,

hasty, and would Precipitate Deliverance if we might have our will, we would Deface and Mar the Beauty of God's great Work by taking it out of his Hands before it be Finished and Completed. Let us be perswaded to let Christ alone, and suffer him to use his own most Wise Method, and to take his own time for Accomplishing his own Work. Whatever our Opinion may be, he is never out of his Way, but still takes the best course for compassing and bringing about the good which he intendeth and designeth for his People.

So much concerning trusting in God with Relation to his Church, and all the Concernments thereof.

2. Let us trust in God for what concerns our selves, and this both with Relation to Spirituals and Temporals.

(1.) Let us trust in God for Spiritual things. I shall instance only in these Three ; Namely, for Strength against our Corruptions ; Ability to serve God and discharge the Duties required of us in our several Places and Stations ; and Strength to persevere in Faith and Holiness to the end.

1. Let us trust in God for Strength against our Corruptions. When you consider

consider how Strong your Corruptions are, how Weak you are, and how Unable to master them, and keep them under ; how Often and how Violently and Impetuously they Transport and Hurry you this Way and that Way ; and of how little force your best Resolutions are to keep you from being overcome by them ; I say, when you consider these things, you are not only Discouraged, but you even despair of ever obtaining more Strength against Sin ; yea perhaps you fear that Sin will be ever gathering more Strength over you, and be getting ground of you every Day, till at length it perfectly Enslave you, and Exercise an Absolute Dominion over you.

But give not way to these Distrustful and Mis-giving thoughts. Still depend on God, and trust in him for carrying on that work in your Soul which he hath begun. If Sin be strong, he is able to break the Power of it ; If Grace be Weak, he can and will strengthen it, concerning whom God the Father hath said, *Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth : I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*

Psal. 138.
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tiles. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, he shall bring forth judgment unto truth, Isaiah 42. 1. 3. That Prayer of the Psalmist, forsake not the work of thy hands, hath the force of an Argument in it. God is not wont to forsake the Works of his Hands; and therefore David in the same place confidently saith, the Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. If there be sufficient Ground for such a Trust and Confidence in any thing, then certainly there is in Spiritual things, the things that concern our Souls. The expresse Declarations and Promises by which God hath undertaken the carrying on and perfecting his Work upon our Souls are many. He hath promised to circumcise the hearts of his People and the hearts of their seed, to love him with all their heart and with all their soul, Deut. 30. 6. He hath said he will put his law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, Jer. 31. 33. That he will put his fear in them, Jer. 32. 40. That he will put a new spirit into them; that he will take away their stony heart, and give them an heart of flesh, Ezek. 11. 19. And so again to the same Effect, Ezek, 36. 25, 26, 27.
That

That he will *subdue their iniquities*, Micah 7. 19. That *sin shall not have dominion over us*, Rom. 6. 14. More-over our Saviour hath the Style and Name of Jesus or Saviour given him, because he was to *save his People from their sins*, Matth. 1. 21. And the very end of his coming into the World, and of his dying for us, was, *That he might purge and cleanse us by the washing of water through the word*, and that he might *present his church to himself without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*, Eph. 5. 26, 27. That he might *purifie to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Titus 2. 14. That he might *wash us from our sin in his own blood, and make us kings and priests to God and his father*, Rev. 1. 5, 6. By all this it appears what Grounds we have to trust in God for the Mortification of our Corruptions, the subduing of our Iniquities, and for the carrying on and perfecting the work of Grace in our hearts. But yet however, we must not here run away with a mistake. We may easily mis-understand these and other the like passages of Scripture.

1. We must not think that this great Work will be done without any Care,
Pains,

Pains, or Endeavours on our part. We must Diligently make use of, and Conscientiously attend on the means which God hath Appointed, and so doing, expect the fulfilling of his Promises. Hence it is that Watchfulness, and keeping of our hearts with all Diligence, and Communing with our hearts, and Examination of our selves, and Attendance on the Ordinances of God, are so much Enjoyned and Recommended to us in the Holy Scriptures. In vain shall we expect the fulfilling of those promises, while we are Remiss and Negligent, and while Indulging to our own Sloth, we take no pains in making use of the Means which God hath ordained to be made use of for attaining of what he hath promised. As in Temporal things, *the hand of the diligent maketh rich*, Prov. 10. 4 : *But the idle soul shall suffer hunger*, Prov. 19. 15. So 'tis in Spiritual things. If a Man be willing to take Pains, if he be Diligent and Industrious, he may expect to grow and thrive in Grace, and to be still gaining ground of his Corruptions ; but if he will Indulge himself in a Slothful neglect of the Means, he may Want, and Starve, and Perish, and Everlastingly miscarry
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for lack of that Grace which another Man that is Industrious, attains.

2. He must not think to attain sensible Increases of Grace, and Spiritual Strength presently. He must be contented to wait on God in the use of Means for some time, and perhaps to wait long, before God will be pleased to Answer his Prayers, Pains and Industry in those sensible Advances and Improvements of Grace and Spiritual Strength, which he desires and longs after. But if he grow not weary of Waiting and taking Pains, he shall be sure to Reap in due Season. Though the time that he Waits may seem long, yet he shall not lose his Labour in the End.

3. He must not expect a thorough Absolute and Compleat Victory over Sin here. There will be still Remainers of Corruption while we are in the Body, I mean in this Body. 'Tis only Death, or that Change which shall at the Coming of Christ be in stead of Death, that will put an End to Sin, and perfectly deliver us from it. And as there will be Remainders of Sin while we are here, so there will still be Imperfection and Defects of Grace. Perfection

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tion is reserved for another World, when all the Remainders of Sin shall be Abolished ; when we shall be Clothed in White Rayment, all the Spots and Stains, the Pollutions and Defilements of Sin being done away, *Rev. 19. 8.* Then all your Prayers for Grace, and all the pains you take in the pursuit of it shall be fully answered, and not till then. But though our Attainments in the mean time be imperfect, yet are they comfortable in divers Respects.

1. In regard we even here Attain to be in some measure freed from the Dominion of Sin, and from the Reigning Power of it, though it still continues its abode with us as a troublesome Inmate which we cannot be rid of. And this is a great thing, that though we cannot be wholly delivered from it, yet it hath lost its Domineering Power, and cannot any longer Exercise it without Control. It doth indeed still attempt to Command and Rule in the Soul ; but the new Nature in the Regenerate Man refuseth to Obey, Gain-says, and Contradicts its Commands. And though in the Conflict between the Flesh and the Spirit, Sin may sometimes prevail, yet in the Issue, 'tis a loser by its Victory.

For

For hereupon stronger and stedfaster Resolutions are taken up against it, and it afterwards meets with more Vigorous and Constant Opposition from the Regenerate Part.

2. Our Attainments here though Imperfect are Comfortable, because in what we do attain we perceive that our labour is not lost ; we gain something though not as much as we desire ; and what we do gain still encourageth us to go on and persevere in the use of means.

3. Our Attainments here though Imperfect are Comfortable, in regard that what we Attain, is a pledge and an earnest of that future Perfection which we are pressing hard after, and waiting for.

But you will say perhaps, I have no such Grounds of Comfort ; for I gain nothing at all ; I rather seem to go backward than forward. All my Conflicts with Sin, end in my greater Discouragement. The more I strive against it, the stronger it seems to be, and the more unable I find my self to be to master it, or to give any Effectual check unto it.

Answer. To this I Answer, First that if it should be so indeed as you apprehend the matter, and as you represent

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your

your Condition, your case would be very sad ; and the cause of what you complain of, must of necessity be within your self, and no where else. It cannot be, that instead of going forward you should go backward, that Sin should be stronger in you, and you still more and more unable to master it, I say this cannot be but from your self and through your own default. There is nothing surer than that 'tis either the neglect of the means, or the Careless, Formal, and Inconstant use of them that is the true cause thereof. This I say upon a Supposition, that there is Reason for your Complaints, and that things are really as bad with you as you apprehend them to be.

2. But 'tis possible that you may be much mistaken, and that your Condition may be far better than you Represent it to your self. We sometimes apprehend Sin to be stronger in us, not because 'tis so in it self, but because we are more sensible of the Power and Prevalency of it. It was, it may be, as strong before, and perhaps much stronger ; but then you being a willing Slave unto it, were not sensible of the Power and Dominion of it in your Soul. And the same
may

may be said of your fear that you decline in Grace, and go backward rather than forward. It may be, you now see and discern more of the Revoltings and Backslidings of your evil heart than heretofore you did; and out of the great desire you have to grow better, you are jealous of your self, and afraid that you grow worse.

3. 'Tis the usual course of God's Providence when he is about to bestow more Grace, to lay the Foundation thereof in a deeper sense of the want of Grace. For hereby he stirs up in Men more earnest Desires after Grace, so that they pray for it more Fervently and Constantly, and Apply themselves to the use of all other Means for Attaining it with more Diligence and Seriousness.

Hitherto of trusting in God for subduing Corruption, and for Increase of Grace and Spiritual Strength.

2. Let us trust in God for Strength and Ability to serve him, and do our Duty in our Respective Places and Stations. For Encouraging and Strengthening your trust in God for his Assistance, Consider,

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1. That

1. That God never calls a Man to any Imployment or Service, he never puts him upon any Business, but he furnisheth him with Ability in some measure to undergo it. To ingage a Man in Imployment and put him upon Service, and then to deny him that Assistance which is Absolutely necessary for the performance of it, is neither Consistent with the Wisdom, nor with the Goodness, nor with the Faithfulness of God. Wise Men will not put others upon Imployment which they know them to be unable to go through with: and good Men, yea, such as have but any thing of good Nature, will not deny their Assistance to those whom they have ingaged in any Undertaking; much less will they be wanting to them and fail them when they have promised them their best Assistance. This were such Falseness and Treachery, as no Honest Man, no Man that deserves to be trusted would be guilty of. Far be it from us therefore to have such Unworthy and Dishonourable thoughts of God.

2. Consider that God many times enables weak Men, that seemed to have small Abilities for the due performance of what is Incumbent on them; I say he enables

enables them to discharge the Duties of their Imployment beyond all expectation. And this,

1. That his own Power may be so much the more Conspicuous, and the Glory thereof be so much the more Exalted and Magnified, when *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he ordaineth strength*, as the Psalmist speaks, Psalm 8. 2.

2. That he may hereby incourage weak Instruments to serve him when he calls them thereunto, and puts them upon it. But this Assistance may they especially expect who are ingaged in Services in which the Honour of God is more Immediately and more Eminently concerned. But they who may warrantably expect the Presence, Assistance, and Blessing of God in their Undertakings, must be Careful.

1. That they have a call to the Imployment which they Undertake, and Ingage themselves in. If they put themselves upon Service without a call thereunto, they may not expect God's Presence with them, and Assistance, upon the account of any Promise that he hath made, for he hath no where made any

such Promise but to those only whom he Imloys, and sets at Work.

2. They must serve God faithfully in that Service which he Imloys them in, they must seek his Glory, they must Sincerely and in Singleness of heart design it, and aim at it in what they do.

3. They must Earnestly and Constantly implore his Grace and beg his Assistance in what they undertake.

4. They must thankfully acknowledge him in whatever Assistance they have, and in whatever Successes their Endeavours are attended with ; and give him all the Glory of it. If thus they enter upon their Imployment, and if thus they Endeavour to serve God in the managing of it, they have all Reason to expect and make sure account of his Gracious Presence and Assistance, And yet however they may not think to enjoy it always alike. God never intended so to oblige himself by any Promise, but that he is still at liberty sometimes to withdraw from his Servants, or to Abate and Suspend the Influences of his Gracious Presence, as to his own Wisdom seems best. And this he doth,

1. To make them the more sensible of their continual need of his help, and
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of the Absolute necessity of their constant dependance on him for it. If it should be always alike with them, they would then be ready to think that they did all they do by their own Strength, and that they were not beholding to the Assistance of the Grace of God for it.

2. God sometimes withdraws from them, and deprives them of that Divine Help and Assistance which at other times they have had Experience of, that he may thereby Correct and Chasten them for their Sloth and Carelessness, for their Coldness, Slackness, and Inconstancy in Prayer for his Assistance, for their neglecting to Stir up, to Exercise and make use of the Grace which they have Received, and for their assuming to themselves the Glory of what God hath wrought in them and by them, and not rendring to him those Humble and Thankful Acknowledgments that are due to his name for it. In a word, if they were more Careful, Conscientious, and Constant in the performance of these and other particulars of their Duty, they might then hope to enjoy his Gracious Presence and Assistance in a more Constant and Eminent way. God mostly withdraws from them because they first with-

with-draw from him some way or other. And this is all that I had to say concerning our trusting in God for Strength and Ability to serve him, and do our Duty in our several Places and Stations, which was the second thing Propounded to be spoken of.

3. Let us trust in God for Strength to hold out and persevere in Faith and Holiness to the end, notwithstanding all the Tryals and Temptations which we may meet with. When we consider and sadly ponder in our minds our own weakness, together with the fore Tryals and strong Temptations which in these perilous times may Encounter us, we may be full of fears how we should be able to hold out in the Evil Day, if such a Day should come upon us. But for the Care of these our distrustful Fears, and for the Encouraging of our Dependance on God for Strength to persevere; let us make use of these Considerations.

1. God can easily keep off and Avert those fore Tryals which we fear. We Disquiet and Afflict our selves with the frightful expectation of many things which never come to pass: God is often much better to us than our Fears.

2. If

2. If such things should come upon us, yet God is able to support us. How weak soever you apprehend your self to be, and how unable soever you feel your self to be, for withstanding such Temptations as may assault you, God is able to uphold you in your Integrity, and to give you in Strength, proportionable to every Tryal.

3. If you belong to him, he hath promised that he will *not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will together with the temptation make a way to escape*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. This promise he makes good unto the weakest Christians; for to these it Extends as well as to those that are stronger. The comfort of it belongs to all true Believers without Exception. If by their Unbelief and Distrust they Exclude not themselves from the Benefit of it, the promise doth not Exclude them.

4. God hath oftentimes enabled Weak and Fearful Christians to withstand those Assaults, and resist those Temptations which others who thought themselves stronger, and thereupon were full of Self-confidence, could not withstand, but were foiled and overcome by them.

5. Weak

5. Weak Christians that are deeply sensible of their Weakness, and in the sense thereof look up to God for strength, have reason above others to hope for and expect the Supports and Assistance of his strengthening Grace in the hour of sore Tryals and Temptations : for God considers their Infirmary, and hath a tender regard of their Weakness. As they most need his strengthening Grace to uphold them, so shall they be most sure to be supported and relieved by it ; such is his Fatherly care of them, such are his tender Compassions toward them. But here it will concern you,

1. To labour to be sure that you are in Covenant with God, that you may be able upon good grounds to Apply the Benefit and Comfort of his promises to your self ; I mean, both the promises of the Grace of perseverance in the General, and that particular promise of not being tempted above what you are able, or shall be able to bear, and that whatever your pressures or straits may be, God will still make a way for you to escape, to escape if not suffering, yet that which is worse than suffering, the violating of your Conscience by sinning against God.

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2. To be sure that you look up to God for strength to persevere, beg it of him by fervent and unwearied Prayer, depend on him alone for it, and utterly Renounce all vain confidence in your own strength.

3. To be still labouring what you may, to strengthen Faith and all other Graces, and to be ever laying in and treasuring up more and more Spiritual furniture and provision against an Evil day. And thus I have done with the first Branch of the Exhortation relating to Spiritual things.

SERMON XII.

Isaiah 26. 4.

*Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the
Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength.*

2. **L**ET us also trust in God with Relation to Temporals. I shall here instance in Four Particulars. Let us trust in God for Counsel and Advice in all our Affairs ; let us trust in him for Safety and Preservation in all our dangers ; let us trust him for supply of all our wants ; and let us trust in him for our posterity, and those that come after us.

1. Let us trust in God for Counsel and Advice in all our Affairs. A Man shall often find in the course of his life, that he is in those Circumstances, and surrounded with those Difficulties, that
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he knows not what to do, or which way to turn him. He can neither resolve himself what is fittest and safest to be done ; neither can he meet with any other Man that can resolve him. Now in such perplexities, what other course hath he to betake himself unto, then to look up unto God, ask counsel of him, and depend on him for it ? This he hath all manner of Encouragement to do, whether he shall consider the Wisdom of God, the Goodness of God, the Promises, or his own Experience.

1. The Wisdom of God is such, that there is no Case, there can be no Case so Intangled, so Difficult, so Perplexed, but he is able to counsel and advise, to direct and guide a Man therein. Though the Wisest amongst Men may be at their wits end, yet his Wisdom is never at a loss. 'Tis easie for him by the unerring due of his Advice, to lead us in a plain and smooth way out of those perplexities which no Wit of Man can disintangle us from.

2. The Goodness of God is such, as that he will not deny us his Counsel, Direction and Guidance, when in the sense of our own weakness and utter disability to direct our own steps, we
have

have recourse to him for counsel, and relye upon him for his guidance. God never fails to shew them the course they should take, and to point out to them a safe way, who in their Distresses and Perplexities trust in him, and cast themselves upon him.

3. He hath by many promises assured them thereof, if they look up to him, trust in him, and commit themselves and their affairs to his Conduct, Counsel, Guidance and Disposal. *Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass, Psal. 37. 5. Commit thy works unto the Lord, and the thoughts of thy heart shall be established, Prov. 16. 3. Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, lean not to thy own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths, Prov. 3. 5. Thine ears shall here a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk in it, when thou turnest to the right hand, and to the left, Isa. 30. 21. I am the Lord thy God that teacheth thee to profit, and leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go, Isa. 48. 17. The Lord shall guide thee continually, Isa. 58. 11. If any man lack wisdom let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be*

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given him, James 1. 5. Add thereunto that 'tis the Style and Title of Christ to be *the Counsellor* of his Church, *Isa. 9. 6.* and the Apostle speaking of Christ, saith, *He is of God made unto it wisdom as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,* 1 Cor. 1. 30. By all these Scriptures it appears, that God is most ready to counsel, advise, direct, and guide those who come unto him, and relye on him for it. But here however we must take one caution along with us, which is this; whensoever we ask counsel of God, and beg his directions in any thing, we must be careful to get our hearts to be so framed and disposed as that we may be truly willing to be ruled by him; to receive and follow whatever counsel he is pleased to give us. We often ask counsel when we are resolved before hand what course to take; and when our Resolutions and Purposes are so fixed already as no counsel that can be given us shall be of force to remove us. When therefore we would address our selves to God for counsel in any Business or matter of concernment to us; 'tis a great and a most necessary thing that we should in the First place labour to get our hearts subdued to the will

will of God, and that we should bring them to a perfect willingness to be at his disposal in the Business concerning which, we apply our selves to God for counsel; for otherwise we do but mock God when we ask counsel of him, as did the dissembling and false-hearted *Jews*, *Jer.* 42. 20. Who being already resolved to go down into *Egypt* came to the Prophet to inquire of the Lord whether they should go thither or no. And though we be not fully resolved what to do, yet many times we shall observe a sensible Byas and strong Inclination in our hearts one way rather than the other way. Till this Inordinate Byas and Inclination be in some measure removed, and till our hearts come to be equally poised, and to be in a readiness to do any thing, to take any course that shall appear unto us to be according to the mind and will of God therein. I say till our hearts be come to this frame, we are not fit to ask counsel of God, neither have any reason to expect that he should be ready to counsel us. For to what end should he counsel us when he sees we are not willing to be counselled by him? To what purpose should he say to us, *This*

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is the way, walk in it, when he discerns the frame of our hearts to be such, as that we have no mind to walk in it? when he sees we are bent upon our own ways which we like better. But when a Man can truly and in the uprightness of his heart say, lo here I am to do thy will O God, only be thou pleased to shew it me, and let me but understand what thy pleasure is. I am at thy disposal, ready to comply with thy Counsels whatsoever they shall be, and to follow thee whithersoever thou shalt lead me: when I say a Man can truly say thus unto God, and when this is the secret frame of his heart, then he need not make any question but that God will be most ready to vouchsafe him his Counsels, and make known his mind to him.

But perhaps you may here say, I find my heart will not be brought to that frame of Indifferency which you speak of. I observe there is a great inclination of my Heart and Affections one way, and I cannot remove it. In this case what is to be done? I Answer,

1. You must earnestly beg of God that he would be pleased to subdue your heart unto himself, and correct the inordinate

ordinate Propensions and Inclinations thereof to any thing which he may see is not safe or fit for you.

2. If this abate not your inordinate Inclinations, and bring not your heart to a more even and equal temper, yet however take up firm and stedfast Resolutions that you will follow whatever Counsels God shall give you, though never so much against your own Inclinations. Resolve that if it shall appear to you that he would have you go another way, you will be ready to deny your self, and cross your own Inclinations that you may conform your self to his will. The taking up of such Resolutions, is the least that you can do whensoever you would ask counsel of God. So much concerning the first Instance.

2. Let us trust in God for Safety and Preservation in all our dangers. Here I understand those dangers which we may be exposed unto or meet with in the ways of our Duty. For when we are out of God's way, we are no longer under his protection. But while we keep within those Bounds which God hath set us, and serve him Faithfully and Conscienciously in our places, we

may warrantably cast our selves upon him for our safety and protection. 'Tis true, oftentimes when we should do our duty, and the performance thereof is attended with Hazards and Dangers, the counsel of the Flesh, and of Satan joyning with the Flesh, is, spare your self ; if you should go on, such and such Evils you may run upon and incur. It concerns you therefore to consult your quiet and safety, and not to adventure your self where in all probability you will suffer for it. But where any Duty or Service is to be performed, we must *not consult with flesh and blood*, much less with Satan, but do our Duty whatever may come of it, or whatsoever may upon that account befall us. This I speak upon supposition that we are convinced that 'tis a Duty, and cannot without sin be waved or neglected. When our Duty lies plain and clear before us, we must not care whose displeasure we incur by the performance of it, nor what Inconveniences or Hazards threaten us, unless we decline it. Being in these Circumstances, we must chearfully address our selves to the performance of what God requires of us, and trust him with our safety and preserva-

preservation. And in all cases of this nature, for our better encouragement to trust in him, let these Considerations lye before us.

1. That the honour of God is ingaged to own his Servants and stand by them, when they adventure themselves for him, and in his Service : I mean, unless the case so stands, that it would be more for his Glory that they should suffer, then be Exempt from suffering.

2. God hath promised that he who will *lose his life for his sake shall save it*, Matth. 10. 39. And on the contrary, hath threatned that he who in such cases will *save his life, shall lose it*. So then a Man cannot better provide for his safety and security, than by adventuring himself in his Service, and upon his Account, when he hath a call thereunto. And on the other side, when consulting with Carnal Wisdom, a Man neglects his Duty that he may decline danger, he takes the readiest course to endanger himself so much the more, and many times brings greater Evils upon himself than those which he ought to shun and avoid. In short, if we do our duty, and trust God with our safety, we shall thereby so provide for and secure our selves, as that

either we shall not suffer, or if we do, we shall be no losers by it in the end, our Sufferings shall turn to our Advantage. And this may suffice to have been spoken concerning the Second Instance.

3. Let us trust in God for the supply of all our wants. This may seem to be a very easie thing to those who enjoy plenty, and whose Cup overflows; to such as were never acquainted with the Temptations that attend a strait and indigent condition. But such as are reduced to great straits, and have none to help them, find it a hard matter to trust in God, and depend on him for the supply of their necessities; sometimes it may be they find they can cast themselves upon God, and relye on his providence for their daily bread, but otherwhiles, how apt are they to call in question his care of them, to distrust his providence, and to disquiet themselves with endless distracting and vexatious cares about the things of the World, saying with themselves, *what shall we eat, and what shall we drink? and where-with shall we be clothed?* But notwithstanding all the mis-givings of our distrustful hearts, we have ample encouragement to trust in God in our greatest
Extremities,

Extremities, and most pressing Exigencies. Wherefore when the sense of your wants is sharpest, and when you are most strongly tempted to distrust God's providence, and to say within your self, that you shall one day perish for want; Consider,

1. The many Gracious promises by which God hath undertaken to provide for you if you be one of his. *They that seek the Lord shall want no good thing,* Psalm 34. 8, 9. *No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,* Psal. 84. 11. *Bread shall be given them, their waters shall be sure,* Isa. 33. 16. To such as in the first place seek the Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof, *all other things shall be added,* Matth. 6. 33. *He will never leave nor forsake them that are his,* Heb. 13. 5. *Godliness hath the promises of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,* 1 Tim. 4. 8.

2. Consider that God provides Liberally and Bountifully for his very Enemies. *Psal. 73. 7. They have more then heart can wish.* He gives them their portion in this life, and fills their bellies with his hid treasure, *Psal. 17. 14.* The wicked live and are mighty in Power; their

their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes ; *their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them ; they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to the grave.* That is, they live prosperously, and dye quickly and easily, in comparison of many others, who after a life full of Troubles and Afflictions, dye a lingring and a most painful death, *Job 21. 7, 8, 9, &c. God maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust, Matth. 5. 45.* All this we behold dayly with our own eyes ; we see the worst, the vilest among Men most Bountifully supplied and Richly furnished with the best and most desireable things that this World affords. Thus is God pleased to Furnish and Accommodate even those who never asked of him the good things which they enjoy, and being possessed of them, abuse them to the dishonour of his name, who so freely and bountifully conferred them on them. Thus *Kind and Liberal* is God *even to the evil and unthankful*, as our Saviour speaks, *Luke 6. 35.* Now if God be so kind and bountiful to the worst of Men,

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to his Enemies, will he not supply his own Children with necessaries.

3. Consider that such is the goodness of God, that he provides for Irrational Creatures. *The eyes of all do wait on him, he giveth them their meat in due season ; he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing,* Psalm 145. 15, 16. *He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry,* Psal. 147. 9. This Argument our Saviour makes use of to reason us out of our distrust of God's providence. *Behold the fowls of the air, saith he, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are not much better than they ?* Matth. 6. 26.

4. Consult your own Experience, and the Experience of all God's People. Though you and they may often have been reduced to great Extremities, yet did God ever utterly forsake any of his in their straits ? did he not ever send them Relief when their necessities were greatest ? did he not ever contrive means for their supplies some way or other ? *he hath not forsaken them that seek him,* Psal. 9. 10. It was never known that he did forsake any of them ; no Instance thereof

thereof can be given. *I have been young and now am old, saith the Psalmist, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread, Psa. 37. 25.* What reason therefore have you to distrust God's providence who never yet failed any of his? why should you not trust in him, and conclude that he who hath hitherto provided for you will still provide for you, and from time to time give you in those supplies which your condition requires. Why should you think that he who hath never forsaken any of his will forsake you? take heed that you allow not your self to entertain such thoughts of God.

5. Consider that God hath expressly forbidden you to be thoughtful and solicitous about these things, and that to ease your mind, and discharge it from all Anxious and Distracting cares concerning these things, he hath taken all the care of them upon himself. *Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of it self; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, Matth. 6. 34. Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplications with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, Phil.*

Phil. 4. 6. *Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee, he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved,* Psal. 55. 22. *Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you,* 1 Pet. 5. 7. Why then should you Burthen and Afflict your self with those troublesome cares which God dischargeth you from, and easeth you of, if you will hearken to him, and be ruled by him ?

But here however, as you expect that God should take care of you, and provide for you ; be sure that you so carry and demean your self as becomes one that may expect to find such favour in his Eyes.

I. Let it be your care to walk Unblameably, to keep a good Conscience, and to endeavour in all things to please God. God hath declared that he will *withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly*, Psal. 84. 11. And they are the Righteous concerning whom *David* saith, *that he never saw them forsaken, nor their seed begging bread*, Psal. 37. 25. So that Gracious promise, *Bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure*, Isa. 33. 16. is made to him that walketh Righteously and speaketh Uprightly. And so 'tis Godliness that hath the *promise of the life*

Life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8. But as for Wicked and Ungodly Persons, there is no promise made to them.

2. You must give your self to Prayer, petitioning God for the supply of your wants. *They that seek the Lord, shall want no good thing,* Psal. 34. 10. Wherefore the Apostle in the place before mentioned, Phil. 4. 6, *requiring us to be careful for nothing,* adds, *that our requests should be made known unto God by Prayer and Supplications.*

3. You must diligently exercise your self in some lawful and honest Employment, whereby you may serve God's providence in order to the supply of your wants. *Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed,* Psal. 37. 3. *But the idle soul shall suffer hunger,* Prov. 19. 15.

4. You must chiefly mind and seek after Heavenly things, so Earthly things shall not be wanting to you. *First seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you,* Matth. 6. 33.

5. You must labour to be contented with that portion which God hath allotted you, be it more or less. To this
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frame of Spirit the Apostle Exhorts, *Heb. 13. 5.* And enforceth his Exhortation from God's promise of not leaving nor forsaking his, saying, *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*

6. You must from time to time observe God's providence in those supplies that are afforded you ; you must acknowledge him whoever be the Instruments of your good, and give him the glory thereof. For 'tis of him that any are able to be helpful to you ; and 'tis of him that they are willing. He gives them Ability, and he gives them Hearts. He openeth Hearts and Hands where and when he pleaseth. To him therefore must you look, to him must you make your Humble and Thankful Acknowledgments of all, as if you received all immediately from his own hand. Thus if you endeavour to demean yourself, you shall be sure to be supplied with what is absolutely necessary, and with what the most Wise God judgeth to be best and meetest for you, though perhaps not always with what you desire, and would have dealt to your self
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if you might have been your own Carver.

But you will say, God hath taken away from me the only support of my Life ; the Staff on which I leaned, and on which all my dependance was. The only stay I had to uphold me, and keep me from sinking, is gone.

Answer, 1. Your only stay say you ? Not so, I hope. If you had no surer stay, no firmer support than any Creature, your condition was most miserable when at best.

2. Perhaps you leaned too hard on that Staff. If you did, then was it most just with God to take it away from you. This is the usual course of God's most Wise and Righteous providence, to remove our props when we rest too much on them.

3. God who hath taken away from you one Supporter, is able to raise you up another. He hath all mens hearts in his hand, turning them as the Rivers of Water whithersoever he pleaseth, *Prov. 21. 1.* All Instruments are at his Command to be Employed for the good of his people as to him seemeth best. Not only all the visible Creatures here below, but the Glorious Angels
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are ready to do him this service. *They are all ministring spirits sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation,* Heb. 1. 14.

4. He wants not means to supply you himself with what is needful, yea to furnish you abundantly, if it be for his Glory, and for your Good, for your real advantage that it should so be. *For the earth is his and the fulness thereof,* Psalm 24. 1. *The silver and the gold is his, and all the hid treasures of darkness are at his disposal,* Hag. 2. 8. Isa. 45. 3. *All the beasts of the forrest are his, and the catel on a thousand hills,* Psal. 50. 10.

5. He can give such a Blessing to a little, that it shall go a great way ; though the Oyl in the Cruse, and the Meal in the Barrel be as good as spent, yet he can by his Secret and Efficacious Blessing so lengthen it out to you as you shall feel no want. You shall find that your supplies how small soever, shall be sufficient ; you shall have enough.

6. He can give that contentment with a little, that it shall yield you as much comfort and satisfaction, as if it were a thousand times as much as it is.

7. He can give you that sweet taste, and sense of his love in a little, which

shall make it better to you than if your Cup did overflow, and you were furnished with the richest confluence of all the best things that this World affords. 'Tis not a huge Mass of the things of this World that makes Men happy, or renders their Lives comfortable.

A Mans life, that is, the comfort of his life, *consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth*, Luke 12. 15. So I have done with the third Instance to be spoken to.

4. Let us trust in God for posterity, and those that come after us. Many Parents find this to be a very hard Lesson. Having little or nothing to leave their Children, they are much troubled to think how they will live, and what will become of them when they shall be taken from them. There is scarce any thing that more troubles many than this doth, when they lye upon their Death-beds, and are just going out of the World. And this their trouble is usually so much the greater, if their Children be very Young when they must leave them. But good Parents that have in any measure discharged their Duty to their Children, have all manner of encouragement to com-
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mit their Children to God ; and to trust in him to take care of them, and make provision for them. To this purpose, consider

1. That you trust God for greater matters than the Temporal concerns and welfare of your Children, when you shall be taken from them. You trust in him for the Eternal Welfare and Salvation of your own Soul ; and will you not trust him to make provision for your Children ?

2. Consider that God hath a greater interest in your Children than you have. They are his Children, he gave them you, 'tis by his free Gift and Donation that you have enjoyed them so long. Why therefore should you question but that God will take care of and provide for his own ?

3. Consider that he hath commanded you to cast all your care upon him as hath been said before. Why therefore should you not cast the care of making provision for your Children, especially when you shall be taken from them, and will no longer be able to look after them or take care of them.

4. He hath particularly declared his care, his peculiar care of the Fatherless,

the Destitute, the Friendless, the Poor and Needy, the Afflicted, and the like. But of the Fatherless in special manner. He hath often required and strictly enjoined Men to take care of them, to do them right, to protect and defend them. *Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless*, Isa. 1. 17. *Oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow*, Jer. 7. 6. *Defend the poor and fatherless, do justice to the afflicted and needy*, Psal. 82. 3. *You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child*, Exod. 22. 22. *Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger or of the fatherless*, Deut. 24. 17. And so or to the like effect in many other Scriptures. But besides all the strict charges that God hath laid upon Men to take care of and stand by the Fatherless, if Men notwithstanding all this should neglect their Duty, God hath taken upon himself the care of the Fatherless. *The Lord preserveth the stranger, and relieveth the fatherless*, Psal. 146. 9. *He executeth the judgment of the fatherless and the widow*, Deut. 10. 18. *He is the helper of the fatherless*, Psal. 10. 14. Yea he vouchsafeth to style himself the Father of the Fatherless. *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow is God in*

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his holy habitation, Psal. 68. 5. Hence that safe counsel of Solomon, Remove not the old land-mark, enter not into the field of the fatherless ; for their redeemer is mighty, he shall plead their cause with thee, Prov. 23. 10. Now after that God hath spoken so much concerning his care of the Fatherless, with how much inward quiet and holy security, with what humble confidence of God's care of their posterity, should dying Parents commit their surviving Children to his Gracious providence. And whereas this, as hath been said, often adds to the trouble and thoughtfulness of dying Parents, that they have so little, it may be nothing at all to leave their Children, this very Consideration should make them commit their Children to God's providence, with so much the greater confidence of his care of them. For such is the Merciful and Gracious disposition of God, that the less their Parents can leave them, and the fewer friends they have to help them, the more ready will he be to look after them, to take care of them, to succour and relieve them, to stand by them and protect them as their Necessities and Exigencies shall at any time require it. And

much the rather may Parents leaving the World, thus commit their Children to God's providence, If

1. They have been careful to make the best provision for them that they could, by their Diligence and Industry in those ways of honest Imployment in which the providence of God ingaged them ; and by their Thriftiness and Providence ; and have not lavished away and mispent what God bestowed on them profusely and wastefully.

2. If they have been Consciencious in the course of their lives, and been careful to live in the fear of God ; for this derives a Blessing upon their Posterity. *The generation of the upright shall be blessed, Psal. 112. 2. I have been young and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed, Psal. 37. 25, 26. The just man walketh in his integrity, his children are blessed after him, Prov. 20. 7. Though hand joyn in hand the wicked shall not be unpunished, but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered, Prov 11. 21.*

3. If they have given their Children good Education, and brought them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Lord. He sheweth mercy unto thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments, Exod. 20. 6. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto childrens children; to such as keep his covenant, and to such as remember his commandments to do them, Psal. 103. 17, 18.

4. If they have prayed much for their Children. Many prayers offered up unto God for them, remain upon the file to be answered when their Parents are in Heaven. Children may fare the better both in Spirituals and Temporals as long as they live, for those prayers which their Parents made for them in their Life-time here. I say, if thus they have in some good measure discharged their Duty in Relation to their Children while they were here with them, they may with so much the greater confidence leave them unto God's care and provision when he calls them hence.

Now having all these Encouragements to trust God with your Children when you must leave them, how Sinful, how Intolerable and utterly Inexcusable would your distrust of God's providence be! What more can you desire to induce

you, and prevail with you to trust in God for them?

But it may be you will say, I am not so much troubled about the outward Estate and Temporal concerns of my Children, in case that I should be taken from them, as about their Spiritual and Everlasting condition.

1. If I should Dye, I know not who would take care of them to instruct them, and bring them up in the fear of God. When I am gone, for any thing that I know, they may fall into the hands of those who may either wholly neglect them as to what concerns their Souls, or which is worse, who may corrupt and poyson them.

2. We live in dangerous times; the Anti-Christian Party have been long attempting to bring us once more into Bondage; to set up Popery amongst us, and to abolish the Protestant Religion. If so heavy a Judgment should come upon the Land, my Children might be brought up in Superstition and Idolatry, to the everlasting Ruin and Destruction of their Souls, which I cannot think of without Horror. When I consider how great our Dangers are, how
Slippery

Slippery our present condition and station is, what dismal Calamities may be coming upon us, what Miseries may be even at the door; methinks I could for mine own part be very willing to leave this World, and to be *taken away from the evil to come*: but when I again consider what misery may befall the Souls of my Children when I am gone; this makes me unwilling to leave them in such a Perilous and Critical season, and I am more Thoughtful and Sollicitous about them, than about any other concerns that I have in all the World.

These I grant, are very great and important matters, and such as deserve your most serious thoughts. But yet however you must take heed that you be not Inordinately and Sinfully disquieted about them; which you may easily be, if you give way to the workings of your own heart. You may afflict your mind with endless thoughts of these matters; but when all is done, you must fix on this at last, that God is to be trusted with these things as well as with any thing else. When the time is come that you must bid farewell to all things under the Sun, and pass into
another

another World, with whom can you trust them safely and securely, but with God? Who is there in all the World that can be relyed on for these matters, but he who is the Supream Governour of the World, and manageth all the Affairs and Transactions thereof according to the counsel of his own will? But to speak a few words more particularly to both the fore-mentioned grounds of your trouble.

1. You are troubled about the Education and Instruction of your Children when you shall be taken away from them. Here these Two things are incumbent on you in Relation to them.

1. That you be careful to discharge your Duty in Relation to their Souls while you are with them; that is to say, that you pray much for them, that you instruct them if they be capable thereof; that you endeavour to check and suppress vice in them, that you inure them to the practice of Religious Duties; that you walk before them in the way to Heaven, and give them good Example, and the like.

2. That you take the best and most prudent order that you can for the good of their Souls, after that you shall be taken

taken from them ; that you endeavour as much as in you lies, to leave them to the Care, Tuition, Instruction, and Government of those concerning whose faithfulness in the discharge of so weighty a trust, you have the greatest confidence. These two things having been performed, you have done your Duty ; and as for what may further concern them with Relation to the good of their Souls after your Decease, you must refer your self and them to God, cast them on God's providence, and trust in him for what relates to their Spiritual and Everlasting good, as well as for their Temporal well-being. And that you may the better do it, Consider

1. That God hath promised to be the God of his People and of their Seed after them. This promise he made to *Abraham the father of the faithful*, Gen. 17. 7. And the same promise is made to all true Believers who tread in the steps of *Abraham* ; for *they are the children of Abraham*, Gal. 3. 7. They are the Children of the Covenant, and to them the promise Extends, even to *as many as the Lord shall call*, Acts 2. 39.

2. God hath promised to Circumcise the heart of his People, and the heart of

of their Children, *Deut. 30. 6. To pour his spirit upon their seed, and his blessing upon their off-spring, Isa. 44. 3. To shew mercy unto thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments, Exod. 20. 6.* Which promises, and whatsoever else there are to the like effect, though they are not so to be understood as if God by them did absolutely ingage himself to bestow Grace upon all and every one of the posterity of his Children, yet is there very much in such promises, so much, as that a true Believer may upon that account with much inward peace and quiet, leave his posterity to the care and disposal of God in what concerns their Souls, and trust him with them; yet so, as not prescribing to him what he should do for them or with them, but submitting all to his most Wise and Righteous disposal.

2. As for the other ground of your trouble, *viz.* that if Popery should prevail amongst us, your Children might be trained up in Superstition and Idolatry, and so everlastingly miscarry; to this I say,

1. Though we have cause to fear upon several accounts that Popery may at last prevail, especially considering our horrid
Sins

Sins by which we have deserved that fearful judgment ; yet we are not without some Grounds of hope also to balance our fears : God hath of late eminently appeared for us notwithstanding all our Sins, by discovering the bloody Counsels of our Enemies, and in great part blasting them : and this affords us some encouragement to hope that he will not now forsake us, and after all that he hath done for us abandon us at last, and give us up to the will of our Enemies.

2. If God, to punish us for our Sins, and for other Reasons known to himself, should permit Popery to break in upon us with an Irresistible Torrent, yet he can quickly turn the Torrent, and Re-establish the true Religion amongst us with advantage. Though the Storm may be sharp, yet he can so over-rule matters, that it shall be soon over.

3. If such a rueful state of things should continue long, yet he who reserved to himself Seven Thousand in *Israel* that never bowed the Knee to *Baal*, even in a time of Universal Corruption and Apostacy, most easily could, and we are well assured would reserve to himself a remnant to maintain and keep up
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This was
Preached
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the true Religion, soundness of Doctrine, and purity of Worship, and to propagate, deliver over, and transmit the same to posterity, by training up the younger sort in the principles and practice of the Reformed Churches. In short, whatever times come, God will take order, and provide means, that whatever shall tend most to his Glory, the good of his Church, the propagation of his true Religion, and the accomplishing of his Promises, shall in his time be fulfilled : and there we must leave it. Great things belong unto the Lord ; but things revealed to us and to our Children, that we may do them. Wherefore do your Duty while you are here, and cast all your care upon God for the future. You must Dye, but God will still be alive to take care of such as you leave behind you. *Trust in the Lord for ever ; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*

S E R M O N

SERMON XIII.

Psalm 147. 5.

His understanding is Infinite.

THERE are two Books which
Reveal God unto us ; the Book
of the Creatures, and the Book
of the Holy Scriptures.

In the Book of the Creatures, we may
read God in such broad and legible
Characters, that he must shut his Eyes
and see nothing that will not see and
acknowledge a God.

Not only the whole Creation, the
intire Body and System of the Creatures,
and the admirable Order, Connexion,
and Dependance of the parts thereof
in relation to one another, and in rela-
tion to the whole, proclaim aloud unto
us the Being, Wisdom, Power and Good-
ness of God ; but every single Creature
considered in it self, and apart from the
whole Mass of Creatures, may discover
something

something of God unto us ; even the very meanest and most ignoble of all the Creatures ; there is not a small Shrub or Plant, though no better than a Weed, but hath the impress of God's Workmanship, and therein of his Wisdom and Power, *Præsentemque refert, qualibet herba Deum.*

And this is that which the Apostle teacheth us, *Rom. i. 20.* The invisible things of God from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.

But among the visible Creatures, there is none that bears such lively Impressions of the Deity as Man doth, who was made after the Image of God : Whose Image though he principally bears in Respect of his nobler part the Soul, yet is there so much of God's Wisdom and Power displayed in the admirable Frame and Composure of his very Body, that *Galen*, though an Heathen, after his Excellent Discourses of the frame of Mans Body, the various uses of the several parts, and the wonderful exactness of the Workmanship, and the most Wise and Admirable accommodation and fitness of every part
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for the uses unto which it was designed, being even wrapt into admiration, he could not contain himself, but he must Compose an Hymn in the Praises of his Maker.

But however, the Book of the Creatures discovers much of God, yet the Book of the Scriptures discovers much more ; and in truth, this Book helps us the better to read and understand the other Book.

This corrects our false Notions of God, and furnisheth us with sound and right principles concerning him. Which principles we bringing along with us to the Study of the Book of the Creatures, we shall be enabled to make a right use of them, and through the Manuduction of them as by a Clew, be lead more safely into the Knowledge of God, and be kept from becoming vain in our imaginations of God, like the Heathen, *Rom. i. 21.*

We shall be kept from those Mistakes and Errors concerning God, which without the light of the word, notwithstanding all the help the Creatures afford us, we should certainly run into.

Among many other things which the Scriptures acquaint us with concerning

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God ;

God ; it gives us to understand that God is Incomprehensible, not to be fully understood by us.

A great and useful principle begetting in us an holy Modesty, Sobriety and Reverence in all our enquiries after him.

And this is that which the Scripture now read, informs us of. *Great is our Lord, and of great power ; his understanding is infinite.*

In which words we have three of God's Attributes, His Greatness, his Power, and his Knowledge ; and though only the last of these be expressly said to be Infinite, yet is the same implied also of the two former ; for all the perfections of God being Essential to him, must needs be Infinite as he himself is ; and therefore what is affirmed of one, must by a parity of reason be extended to the rest.

The two former, the Greatness or Immensity and Power of God, I shall not at present treat of ; The third, the Knowledge of God, is that unto which I have confined my Meditations.

But you will say, the Infiniteness of God's understanding which this Text asserts, may seem to prohibit any attempt

tempt to look into it, and to command an humble and silent veneration of those things which are so far above our comprehension. To this I Answer,

1. That an attempt to comprehend those things that are ἀνεκλάλητα Incomprehensible, and fully to declare those things that are ἀνεκλάλητα and ἀρρήτα, unutterable, were both vain and impious. But to look modestly and soberly into those things that yet cannot be fully comprehended, so far as God hath been pleased to Reveal them, and so far as such an imperfect knowledge of them as we are capable of, may be useful to us ; this is not only allowable, but our Duty.

2. There is nothing in God but is Incomprehensible by the Creature, that is, the Creature cannot fully take it in, according to its whole Extent and Latitude : and if for that reason we might not Employ our understanding about so Transcendent and Incomprehensible an Object, to what end hath God Revealed any thing concerning himself in the word ?

3. Add hereunto, that as 'tis high presumption to pry into what God hath not Revealed, so 'tis great unthankfulness not to receive and improve

for our good, what he hath been pleased to impart concerning himself.

4. 'Tis the highest and most noble use of our understanding to be exercised about God ; and one great design of God in bestowing reason upon Man, is, that he might Contemplate and Praise his Creator. And this may I hope suffice for my Apologie.

I come now to the words. His Understanding is Infinite. *אין סוף*, *There is no number of his understanding*, saith the Original ; And so the Vulgar Translation following the letter of the Original renders it, *sapientiae ejus non est numerus*, as do also the Seventy, the Chaldee Paraphrase, and the Arabick Version. Which *Immanuel* Sa, and *Simeon de Muis* understand with Relation to the Object ; *there is not the number of the things which he hath known*, saith the one, *which he doth understand*, saith the other : And so a Learned Paraphrast of our own, there is no Number or Computation of his understanding.

But *Menochius* and some others, seem rather to have taken it with relation to the act of understanding than the Object ; *there is no numbring of his Wisdom ;*

Wisdom; Which also the *Syriack* Version intends, expressing it by a word that signifies the Term or Bound of any thing.

There is no Term or Bound of his understanding, *i. e.* 'tis Immense and Infinite. All amounts to this, that God's Knowledge, take it which way you please, either with relation to the Act or Object or both, is an immense and boundless Knowledge.

In handling of which point, seeing our finite and narrow understanding is not able fully to comprehend God's Infinite Knowledge as it is in it self. I shall only speak of it by way of comparison with our knowledge, and shew how many ways it doth excel and surpass it; and so I hope we shall see enough to admire it, and to make some other useful Application of it to our selves though we cannot comprehend it.

'Tis a most rare, and truly wonderful perfection which God hath endued Man withal in his Reason and Intellectual Faculty. By this he is enabled to discourse of those things that are most Sublime and Excellent; to look into those things that are most deep

and profound. By this he is here at present considering the things that lye before him, and are the Objects of his senses, which he sees, which he handles, which he tastes ; and in a moment he is in the ends of the Earth, he converseth in his thoughts with the *East-Indians*, with the *Antipodes*, with the *Americans* : By this noble Faculty while he is confined, it may be to his Prison, to his Chamber, to his Closet, to his Bed, he traverseth the World, and passeth from the North Pole to the South : By this he represents to himself, the Transactions and Affairs of former Ages and Generations as if they had been but Yesterday : By this he consults and adviseth, holds Correspondence and Converse with all those Wise and Learned Men of former times who were in their Graves many Hundred, yea some Thousand Years before he himself was Born : By this noble Faculty in the twinkling of an Eye he takes Wing and mounts up to Heaven, and there Contemplates those Glorious Bodies in their Magnitudes, their Distances, their Motions, their Influences : And thence he penetrates and pierceth thorough

thorough into the *Calum Empyreum*, the Holy of Holies, and discourseth of the Nature of God, of Angels, of the spirits of just Men made perfect, of the everlasting Estate of Immortal Souls when again to be united to their respective Bodys. O Rich and Noble Endowment ! O never sufficiently admired Faculty of our Soul ! But though a thousand times more than all this were said of our intellective Faculty, yet what is our understanding if compared with God's ? our shallow and limited capacity, with his infinite and boundless knowledge ? there is in truth no more comparison between them, then between the faint and weak glimmerings of light which the Glee-worm sends forth in the Night, and the most strong, penetrating and glorious Beams of the Sun when shining in its strength at Noon-day. This will better appear if we shall consider either the Matter and Objects of our Knowledge ; or the Manner and Way of our Knowledge ; or the Measure, Degree and Quality of our Knowledge, if I may so speak.

I. As to the Matter or Object of our Knowledge ; there are but a very

few things that come within the compass of our Knowledge. But God's vast Knowledge reacheth unto all things, grasps and comprehends whatever hath a Being, whatever had at any time a Being or shall have : things present, things past, and things to come, they are within the limits of his Prospect, they are all in the view of his all-seeing Eye.

1. For things present, how very little do we know of them. A few things that are near us and about us, and a few other things that are brought to us by Report, we know ; and these are the narrow bounds of our Knowledge. But there is nothing in all the World, great or small but is known to God. Not only all the Persons and Actions of all the Men in the World, from the Prince that sits upon the Throne, to the Beggar that is upon the Dunghil ; but all the other Creatures, together with all their Motions and Operations, and all the Circumstances of them. 'Tis an amazing and even a confounding thing to consider, that there is not a Leaf upon a Tree, nor a Flower in the Field, nor one single Blade of Grass upon the ground all the World over,

over, nor one Sand in the whole Ball of the vast Body of the Earth but is known to God, and full in his Eye, so as we may say of them all as the *Psalmist* says of the Stars, that God *tells the number of them, and calls them all by their names.*

2. For things past, we know much less of them. There are indeed in the World so many Volumes written of the Histories of former times, as a Man could never Read them over, though he should live to the Years of *Nestor* twice told : but could we suppose that one Man had Read them all over, and so digested them and firmly imprinted them in his Memory, that he could readily give an exact account of every the smallest and most inconsiderable passage in those Volumes ; yet what were all this to the knowledge of all past things ! *Historiographers* for the most part pitch upon some of the most eminent Persons, and the most remarkable Transactions of the Times and Places concerning which they Write : and if they do sometimes descend to speak something of Persons of lower Rank, and of Passages of less Remark, yet take all together which they

they transmit to posterity, and it bears no more proportion to what they pass over in silence, then an handful of dust to a Mountain. Take all that ever hath been written and left upon Record concerning this Town or any other from the very foundation of it, and concerning any Person that hath been at any time an Inhabitant thereof, and how little is it in comparison of what is Buried in Oblivion. There is not one particular Person how mean soever, not a Beggar that goes from Door to Door, whose life if it should be written, and all his words and actions recorded, would not fill up many Volumes, especially if he live to any considerable Age. Now all the Persons, Words and Actions of all that ever lived upon the face of the Earth, from the Creation of the World to this Day, and all the other Creatures that ever have been, and their Operations, Changes, Alterations, are as known to God, and lye as open and full in the view of his Omniscience, as the things which are at present in Being.

3. As concerning things to come, we know least of all. A few things we can foresee in their natural causes, and

And a few other things which God hath Revealed shall come to pass, though not depending upon any certain causes in nature ; and this is the whole Extent of our knowledge of future things ; within these narrow boundaries 'tis confined. As for the greater part of future things, they are shut up in obscure darkness, and hid from our Eyes, so that we know nothing at all even of the things to come in which we seem to be most neerly concerned. Who can be absolutely certain what will become of his Estate after his death ? *A man heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them,* Psal. 39. 6. A Man hath a Son to inherit what he by much fore Travel and unwearied Industry hath purchased : But he knows not whether that Son shall out-live him to enjoy it, or whether though he live, something or other may not intervene to put him beside his right. He hath Built fair Houses, but he cannot tell who may Inhabit them : He hath Planted Orchards, made Gardens and stately Walks ; but he cannot certainly foresee who may Eat the fruit of the one or enjoy the pleasures of the other ; whether one of his own Family and

and Posterity, or a Stranger and an Enemy : As to the knowledge of things to come, we account him the Wifest Man who is (to use *Aristotles* word,) *μάλιστα σοφιστικὸς*, who can aim best, and give the nearest guess : this is the highest that we can attribute to the most considerate and knowing Person, and the most that any prudent Man dares assume to himself in these matters. But now all future things are known to God ; whatsoever shall be to the end of the World, yea to Eternity. *He calls the things that are not as if they were*, saith the Apostle, *Rom. 4. 17.* He speaks of things to come in that Language as if they were already in Being ; and this not only in respect of his Almighty Power to give them an actual Existence when he pleaseth, and of his effectual purpose to do it, but also in respect of his infallible prescience and fore-knowledge of them, whereby he looks upon them as if they were already produced. And this his fore-knowledge extends even to those things which might, if any, seem to be excluded. *He understands our thoughts afar off*, Psalm 139. 2. He foreknows those Actions, Issues and Events which depend upon the

the liberty and free use of our wills, not only which way they are or will be disposed and inclined, but which way a Man will use his liberty ; what choice he will make in all circumstances in which he can be supposed at any time to be : what influences all Objects and outward Occurrences, all Arguments and Sollicitations, all Motives and Considerations will have upon him to attract or draw him, to bend or bow him one way or other. When *David* was debating with himself, whether or no he should put himself into the hands of *Keilah*, as doubting whether they would prove faithful to him, he consults with God, saying, *will they deliver me into the hands of Saul? they will deliver thee up*, saith God to him, *I Sam. 23. 12.* Whatever Enemy of the Church of God, we are to understand by *Gog*, *Ezek. 38.* this is certain, that Prophecy was not to be fulfilled till a long time after it was uttered : and how expressly and absolutely doth God by the Prophet foretel what his Debates and Consultations should be in his own thoughts ; and thereupon what his purposes and resolutions should be. *In that day things shall come into thy*

thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought, and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages to take a spoil and a prey, ver. 10, 11, 12.

I shall conclude this first particular concerning the Object of God's Knowledge, after I shall have added one thing more, which is, that God doth not only know all things past, present and to come, but what never was, nor is, nor shall be : he knows whatever lyes within the immense Verge of his Omnipotency ; whatever is possible, and by his Almighty Power might be if he so pleased, though he never intend to effect it. The Schools discoursing of the largeness of God's Power, rightly assert.

1. That God could have made Millions of Worlds besides this if he had pleased.

2. And in them all a far greater variety of Creatures then he hath made. And indeed who, using his reason aright, dares affirm the contrary ? For who can set bounds to God's Omnipotency, and say, thus far it may reach and no farther ? I mean where neither weakness nor a contradiction is implied, neither of which can be supposed in the present Instance. Now God's Knowledge

ledge must needs be commensurate with his Power, and of equal extent with it. For whatever is but possible is knowable as such ; and consequently must be known by him who knows whatever can be known, or else there would be a defect in his knowledge, which cannot be affirmed without Blasphemy. Besides if any thing were knowable, or could be known which God doth not know, then it must be knowable by some Creature ; for as the Schools say, *omnis potentia passiva fundatur in aliquâ potentia activâ* ; all Passive Power is founded in some Active Power ; and this were also no less Blasphemy than the former. For this were to set the Creature above the Creator, and to Ascribe unto it a Power which he hath not.

And so I pass on to the Second thing propounded, namely the different manner and way of our Knowledge and God's. And there are two considerable differences which I shall briefly speak to.

1. Our Knowledge is by way of Discourse, Gods by Intuition.

2. Our Knowledge is successive, we know one thing after another, God knows

knows all things at once. For the former of these, our Knowledge, much of it is discursive, we gather and collect one thing from another, and infer Conclusions from Premises, and that many times by long Ambages and Circuits before we can come at what we would, and make out to our selves those Conclusions which we aim at. And this is from the Weakness and Imperfection of our Understanding, because we cannot see things immediately and directly as they are in themselves, but must behold them by Reflexion, and in the glass of some other thing. And this way of knowing, as 'tis very laborious and irksome, and requires much pains and industry to traverse, agitate, and bolt out things before we can bring them to any issue; so 'tis very uncertain and fallible. We may easily be deceived, either by mistaking some of our Principles on which we bottom all our Discourses, or by some oversight in making our Deductions from them. Now as in a Chain, if but one Link be loosened and fail, the whole Chain is so far broken, as it falls asunder into two parts: So if but one Link of the whole Catenation of our Reasoning be weak,

weak, all our labour is lost, yea worse than lost ; for instead of gaining the truth by this use of our reason, we are lead into Error ; and do but rationally impose upon our selves, and reason our selves into false-hood. But as for God's Knowledge, that's not by way of Discourse but by Intuition. He beholds all things as they are in themselves ; they are the immediate and direct Objects of his knowledge. He needs not either be at the pains, or run the hazard of collecting one from another by those long remote, and uncertain deductions which our weakness is necessitated to make use of. I shall evidence this by a familiar instance suited to the nature and manner of Intuitive knowledge. A Man that hath the perfect use of his sight, in a clear day when the Medium is thoroughly enlightned, so sees a thing as he is sure he sees it without any more ado. But he who wants the use of his Eyes, or is in the dark, must grope and feel, must gather and collect what this and that is from the touch, or the taste, or the smell, or the sound ; from it's nearness unto, or remoteness from some other thing ; or the like. So God sees all things

immediately and directly by the infallible Eye of his Omniscience. He doth not as it were in the dark, grope after things he sees not, and infer one thing from another as our manner is. And by how much more perfect and certain his Knowledge is who clearly sees a thing with his own Eyes, than his Knowledge who only feels it out and guesSES at it in the Dark, by so much more perfect is God's intuitive Knowledge than ours which is by way of Discourse ; yea and infinitely more than so.

2. We know things successively, one after another. Such is the narrowness of our intellectual faculty, that we cannot be intent on many things at once : but as the Bee travels up and down and goes from one Flower to another, so must we from one Object to another. 'Tis true, there is some difference between the understandings of Men : some have a largeness of heart above others, as 'tis said of *Solomon*, *1 Kings* 4. 29. A more capacious and comprehensive faculty whereby as they can take in more, so they can attend to more things at once than others can ; and yet are not so divided, distracted and confounded between them, as generally Men are.
But

But the largest capacity among Men, can be exercised but about very few things at once. That which *Pliny* reports concerning *Julius Caesar*, that he could at the same time Read, and write Letters, and dictate to his Amanuensis, and attend to what another related, is look'd upon with some admiration of the largeness of his parts: and yet we cannot but suppose some little though almost imperceptible distance between those distinct Applications of his understanding to several Objects. But God knows all things at once: in the same moment grasping and fully comprehending by his infinite understanding all the things in the World; yea whatever hath been from the beginning of the World to this instant; and whatever shall hereafter be either in this World, or in that which is to come to Eternity: and over and above all this, whatsoever is possible though it shall never be, whatsoever lyes within the vast compass of his own Almighty Power, of which before. So much of that Second Head, touching the different manner and way of God's Knowledge and ours: I come to the third thing, which is concerning the

different measures and degrees of his Knowledge and ours. I might here enlarge upon the Fallibility of our knowledge ; and the Changeableness of our knowledge, and the Unchangeableness of his knowledge : but waving both the one and the other, I shall only speak of the imperfection of our knowledge, and the absolute perfection of his. The things which we know, we know only in part and by halves. The things which are most familiar to us, and which we are best acquainted with, as daily and houerly conversing with them, how imperfectly do we know them ! The Air we breath in, the Earth we tread upon, the Fire and Water which we make use of and imploy as our Servants daily ; how many secrets are there in them which we cannot give an account of ! How many difficult, perplex'd and insoluble knots are there in their Composition, Nature, Motion and Operations, which the most Acute and Profound Philosophy could never yet untie. The very light which discovers other things to us, and helps us to see them, is it self so dark and mysterious a thing, that the nature of it hath been variously disputed among Learned
Natu-

Naturalists, *et adhuc subjudice hic est*, neither is the controversie yet decided, and perhaps never will be. The eye of our Body, how admirable is the frame, and strange the sensation thereof! And who hath fully and sufficiently discovered either, and satisfactorily assailed all the difficulties which occur about that one sense. We see things with ease and delight; but how we do it, and by what species and images things from without and at a great distance, are represented and carried to the Eye, is a thing full of wonder to any Man who shall look into it, and throughly consider it. Our understanding, the eye of our Soul, by which we know all things else so far as we know them, how little do we know of it! And how are we gravelled and at a loss, when we apply our selves to enquire into, and understand the manner of the Acts of our own understanding! But why do I insist on these things, which may seem to be incumbred with more difficulties then many other? There is not that Creature in all the World which a Man can say he perfectly knows. Take the least Fly that moves its Wings in the Air, the least and most contempti-

ble Worm that crawles upon the Earth, and there are mysteries and secrets in the Nature, Composure, Properties, Activity, Operations of that Creature which the greatest Wits in the World can never unriddle. I'll go yet further ; there is not the least Moat in the Air, the least Dust or Sand upon the Earth, but hath something in it that no wit of Man can give a full account of. But now God knows all things with a most perfect and comprehensive knowledge. There is not any thing in their Principles, Composition, Properties, Vertues, Operations, or Affects, but he knows thoroughly ! His Infinite understanding penetrates into the Nature and Essence of every thing. And 'tis impossible that it should be otherwise : for they are what he made them ; they have **their** Being, their Principles, Faculties, Vertues and Properties from him : and if we will allow the Artificer to understand his own Workmanship, as the Watch-maker every little Wheel, Spring, Pin in the Watch he hath framed, how much more must we ascribe unto God the perfect knowledge of the Work of his Hands. We see a little of the outside of things, but God sees into them

them and thorough them. If a Mans Breast were all of a pure Christal Glass, or if there be any other material more Transparent, then might a Man see whats within ; as we see things thorough the Air, which being a transparent Body, doth not hinder, but help our sight. To the Eye of God all things are transparent. This perfect and through knowledge of things which we Ascribe to God, the Apostle hath notably set forth unto us, *Heb. 4. 13. There is not any Creature that is not manifest in his sight : all things are naked and opened in the sight of him with whom we have to do.* They are naked, despoiled and strip'd of any thing that might hide them from his sight : and they are opened, *τετρακελισμενα*, cut up as a Beast from the Neck downwards, as some Learned Men understand that Phrase. Before the Beast is cut up, we may guess at the soundness or unsoundness of the inward parts : and we can only guess, for when 'tis cut up we may possibly find it not to be as we expected. But God sees all things as cut up and opened, and so hath a thorough and exact knowledge of them. And hitherto of the Doctrinal part ; I

come now to make some brief Application of what hath been delivered.

Use 1. It should fill us with highest admiration of God's Infinite Perfections, and cause us to fall down and Adore him, whose Knowledge is so Transcendent, and so Infinitely above our Comprehension. So the *Psalmist* after he had been excellency discoursing of this Subject, cries out, *such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it*, Psal. 139. 6. And so the Apostle upon the like occasion, *O the depth both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God*, Rom. 11. 33. And yet these are but parts of his Incomprehensible knowledge, and 'tis but a little portion of it that we have heard, to use *Job's* Expressions in another case, *Job. 26. 14. Can any man find out the Almighty to perfection ?* saith *Zophar*, *Job. 11. 7. There is no searching of his understanding*, Isa. 40. 28.

Use 2. It may also humble and abase us in reflexion upon our own ignorance, and the shallowness of our understanding. If we know a little more than some others do, how are we puffed up in a
vain

vain conceit of our knowledge ! whereas,

1. We are ignorant of a thousand things to one we know.

2. Much of what we think we know we do not know ; 'tis but our mistake, and a dangerous one to, because it keeps us from thinking soberly of our selves according to the small measure of knowledge attained.

3. We know nothing throughly, nothing to perfection.

4. A very considerable part of our knowledge, is to understand our ignorance ; and in the search of truth, we seem to have made a fair progress if we can say this is a knot that cannot be untied. We think we have bestowed our pains to very good purpose, and that we know much of a thing, if we can offer those Inextricable difficulties concerning it, which we dare undertake and maintain, no Man shall be able to remove. We are great Masters of knowledge, if we have enough to puzzle our selves and others.

Use 3. It should teach us Modesty and Sobriety in all our enquiries after the things of God. Not to judge of his Knowledge by our Knowledge, not to

to measure his ways by our own, remembering that *as high as the heavens are above the earth, so far are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts*, Isa. 55. 9.

Use 4. It should teach us to stand in awe of God continually, *who knoweth our down-sitting and up-rising ; who compasseth our path and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways*, Psal. 139. 2, 3. It should make us afraid to offend in secret, as considering that the Eye of God is still upon us, and that *the darkness hideth not from him, but the night with him shineth as the day, and the darkness and the light are both alike to him*, Psal. 139. 12.

Use 5. It should make us careful and solicitous to approve our hearts to God, *who searcheth the heart, and tryes the reins*, Jer. 17. 10. Whose Eyes being ten thousand times brighter than the Sun, pierce into the inmost recesses of the heart, and survey every corner of it ; who is privy to whatever evil we there hatch or harbour ; *and will bring every work, and every secret thing to judgment*, Eccles. 12. 14.

Use 6.

Use 6. Its just matter of terror to all Hypocrites, that the searcher of hearts, the All-seeing God espies all the Rottenness and Falseness of their hearts; as also to all those who allow themselves in any secret way of Sin, because they are secure from the Eye of Man. God is a witness to all that wickedness, which they think they have so closely and wisely hid from the Eye of the World. They do but dance in a Net while they please themselves in the secrecy of their sin. There is an Eye upon them which they are not aware of; and 'tis *ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς τοῦ κυρίου*, the revenging eye of him *who cannot behold iniquity without abhorrence*, Hab. 1. 13. *who will find a time to bring to light the hidden things of darkness*, 1 Cor. 4. 5. *And who will one day judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*, Rom. 2. 16.

Use 7. The consideration of God's Omniscience, of his infinite and boundless Knowledge, is matter of great comfort, to sound and sincere Christians in several cases. As

1. When they labour under discouragements arising from the sense they have

have of their manifold weakneses and sinful infirmities. God sees their hearts, and takes notice of the integrity of them, and the unfained desires of their Souls to please him in all things, though they come far short of attaining what they aim at, and though they have too much cause to complain that albeit *to will be present with them, yet to perform what is good they find not, that the good they would do they do not, and the evil which they hate, that they do,* as the Apostle speaks, Rom. 7. 18, 19, 20.

2. In case of Innocency traduced and wronged by uncharitable Judgings and unjust Censures. In many cases 'tis more easie to maintain and keep up a Mans integrity, than to evidence it to others; to satisfie a Mans own conscience than the World. In such a case 'tis a good ground of singular comfort that God is Omniscient, that he knows our hearts, and that secret Innocency which we cannot make demonstration of to others.

3. Its matter of consolation to us when we are so intangled in Troubles and Afflictions, so encompassed and hemmed in on every side as we can espy no way of escape, no refuge unto which
we

we may betake our selves. God knows how to deliver as the Apostle speaks, 2 Pet. 2. 9. when we do not know : his Infinite Knowledge can discern many ways to relieve and succour us when we can see none.

4. It may comfort us against the secret Plottings and Machinations of Enemies whether the Churches or our own. They may lay their destructive Counsels so deep as we cannot find them out : they may contrive and carry on things in the Dark, so as we may be then nearest our ruin, when we think we have reason to be most secure ; and so as it may be impossible that we should do any thing to counter-work, frustrate or disappoint their designs. But however, God's All-seeing Eye was privy to all their counsels from the beginning ; and he knows how to undermine and evacuate all their Enterprises, *to turn their wisdom into foolishness, as he did Achitophels, to take them in their own craft, and to make them fall by their own counsels,* as David prays against his Enemies, Psal. 5. 10. *To cause them to fall into the pit which they have digged, and to be taken in the net which they have spread,* as again David's Expressions are.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

PAge 4. line 16. read *Joduthun*. p. 20. l. 28. r. *have*
and ingross, for chastening and inhanche. p. 77. l. 17.
 dele to. p. 104. l. 18. r. *ζυλωα*. p. 121. l. 17. r. *unwilling*
to see. p. 137. l. 25. for by, r. *be*. p. 146. l. 19. r. *bears*. p.
 148. l. 8. after *things*, point thus ? not thus ! p. 149. l. 3.
 for and, r. *on*. p. 152. l. 3. r. *αγγορευει*. p. 170. l. 25. dele
stoutly, instead thereof r. *let*. p. 184 l. 30. for liberable r.
liberal. p. 203. l. 15. dele *it*. p. 208. l. 11. for inhanche, r.
ingross p. 210. l. 19. for thing, r. *think*. l. 21. for in, r. *on*.
 p. 214. l. 12. for imply, r. *imploy*. p. 215. l. 2. for thir, r.
their. p. 218. l. 4. r. *to the Angel*. p. 233. l. 17. for but, r. *both*.
 p. 258. l. 24. for see, r. *sees*. p. 265. l. 11. for she, r. *the*.
 p. 267. l. 14. for untained, r. *unfeigned*. p. 272. l. 2. for
interposeth, r. *interpose*. p. 281. l. 9. for as, r. *an*. p. 283. l. 18.
 for statute, r. *stature*. p. 286. l. 9. for will no, r. *will be no*.
 p. 279. the Text should have been, 1 Cor. 13. 8, 9. p. 318.
 l. 16. before *now to go on*, &c. the 9th Sermon should begin.
 the Text should be, 1 Cor. 13. 11, 12, 13. p. 348. l. 8. for or,
 r. *of*. p. 349 l. 11. dele the *Parenthesis*. p. 350. l. 1. for
hearing, r. *seeing*. l. 4. after injoyed put a comma, not a
 full point. p. 354. l. 16. for External, r. *Eternal*. p. 355. l.
 5. for though shape, r. *though we shape*. p. 367. l. 20. for no,
 r. *nor*. p. 388. the last word at bottom should be might. p.
 394. l. 1. r. *take the measure*. p. 404. l. 19. r. *Oeconomy*. p. 426.
 l. 12. for presure, r. *prossure*. p. 428. l. 11. for and the view,
 r. *view without and*. p. 429. l. 26. r. *will forsake you*. p.
 435. l. 15. for Hanain, r. *Hanani*. p. 437. l. 12. r. *unspeakable*.
 p. 441. l. 6. r. *of God*. p. 464. l. 22. for due r. *clue*. p. 466.
 l. 5. for it, r. *us*. p. 475. l. 17. for are not, r. *are ye not*. p.
 494. line 10. read propagation.

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